THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE AFRICAN ISRAEL CHURCH
NINEVEH (AICN)

BY

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DECLARATION

This Thesis is my own original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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Christian churches, both local and foreign-led, have played an important part in African social and political life before and after independence. The colonial powers encouraged missionary-run churches to establish themselves among the local population and to help them in what they saw as their "civilising mission" in Africa. At first there was little opportunity for the establishment of churches run by Africans with the missionaries assuming a "superior" role as though they had a monopoly of the truth. However, as Africans became educated they began to challenge the norms preached by the European missionaries and this gave rise to Church Independency which thereafter became an important feature of the last years of British colonial rule, and which have continued into the post-independence period.

This study is about Independent Church movements in Kenya, with particular reference to those churches which broke off from European-led missions in Western Kenya, and which have survived and prospered in the post-independence period. It was decided to concentrate on one particular church, namely the African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN), which had its headquarters a few kilometres from Kisumu but was actually located in the Nyang'ori area of Kakamega District, to analyse its development chronologically, to investigate and discuss what it had in common with other independent churches in the region and in Kenya as a whole, to find out what were the official attitudes towards its development, and to analyse the roles played by its African founders and leaders. Earlier
authors such as F.B. Welbourn and B.A. Ogut (1966) had emphasised that cultural and social alienation had been the primary factors leading to independent Church Movements with the new African "church rebels" and their followers looking for "a place to feel at home." In this study it was decided that it might be too simplistic to attribute the rise and growth of Church Independency, such as was observed in the AICN, to colonialism and racialism, mainly because the phenomenon has continued to grow even in the post-independence period. In later years, for example, it was found that new factors came to play a dominant role in Church Independency. These included personality cults, personal rivalries, administrative weaknesses, and economic exploitation of the church followers by the church leadership.

The objectives of the case study of the AICN included attempts to explain the question of schism within this church before and after independence and to derive some general observations and principles explaining Church Independency in Kenya and in Africa. It was hypothesised that the emergence of the AICN was not a unique phenomenon but just another case of Church Independency among protestant churches in Kenya, that colonial conditions did have an influence on the make-up of the independent churches and that within these new independent institutions the crisis of succession would be an important internal factor explaining the dynamics of Church Independency.

The history of the AICN was dominated by two personalities and long-time personal friends, namely, David Zakayo Kivuli and Jackson Filemona Orwa, and the inherent rivalries amongst their followers who came from the Luhya of Kakamega District and Luo of Kisumu District in Western Kenya.
Before independence, their church was courted by the up and coming African political leadership, but after independence, personalities, ethnic rivalries, and economic exploitation came to dominate the affairs of the church and to threaten its unity. These eventually led to the split which resulted in the creation of the new Diocese of Kisumu, led by the survivor, of the earlier union, namely Jackson Filemona Orwa.

It is concluded that weak leadership was, and still is, a major contributing factor to dissension in the African independent churches, to economic exploitation and to the lack of clear-cut constitutional guidelines for church growth and normal expansion which is expected of these new African-run institutions. It is recommended that the up and coming independent churches, should be encouraged to be development-oriented, to encourage education and to provide clear-cut institutional framework for church governance and for the avoidance of conflict. In the event of inevitable conflicts, there should also be carefully laid down provisions for conflict resolution. Finally, it is recommended that the independent churches should have clear-cut economic goals to minimise the economic exploitation of their followers by the church leadership.
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CHAPTER ONE

THE INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the rise and the development of the African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) in Western Kenya with particular reference to the Kakamega and Kisumu Districts. The Church sprang up in the area in the 1940's as an Independent Church, and a breakaway movement from churches under Missionary influence and management in this area of Western Kenya. Before a discussion on the Church as such is presented, an introduction to the study area will be made so as to set the ground for the unfolding of the events to be discussed in the rest of the thesis.

1.1 The Study Area

The area of this study is located in the Lake Victoria Basin area of Western Kenya. In the Kenyan context this, on average, is a high potential land area, with high rainfall and good agricultural prospects, and characterized by very important concentrations of human population. The inhabitants of the region are today all agriculturalists, but among some of them, pastoralism was the dominant mode of existence, at least until the end of the last century.

The Lake Basin region accounts for at least 25 percent of the total population in Kenya, and this population is divided roughly equally between the Western Province which is dominantly settled by the Bantu Luhyia, and the Nyanza Province which is occupied by the Nilotic Luo, with the
exception of the south where two important Bantu groups, namely, the Gusii and the Kuria are found.¹

The land in Western Kenya rises from the Lake shore lowlands at approximately 1200 metres above sea level to highlands reaching up to 1800 metres in the Kisii highlands in the South, the Maragoli and Bunyore highlands in the North, and other medium altitude land in the zones sloping westwards towards the shores of Lake Victoria.²

The history of settlement of the Lake Basin is far from being clear, but it is assumed that various groups have moved into the area in the last four to five centuries; with the Bantu, Luhyia and Kisii moving in from the West and South, the Nilotic Luo moving in from the North-West and from the areas now located in Uganda. At one stage, parts of the area were occupied by the Nilotic Kalenjin and the start of the colonial period saw the freezing of the ethnic boundaries with a certain amount of coercion, into what they are today.³

In terms of administrative units, the proper area of study comprises parts of two provinces, namely, the Western Province and the Nyanza Province. Within these two provinces, the study was confined to parts of Kakamega District (South and North Maragoli, Tiriki, Bunyore, and Nyang'ori Locations) and parts of Kisumu District (including the former administrative locations of Nyakach, Kano, Kisumu and Seme). The study concentrated on Kisumu and Kakamega Districts because that is the region with the largest groups of the followers of the African Israel Church Ninoveh (AION). It is nevertheless important to point out that in the last
thirty years, the AICN Church has spread into the far corners of Western Kenya and the country as a whole. But for reasons of logistics, it was not possible to carry out field work in all these areas, hence the concentration in Kakamega and Kisumu Districts.

The whole study area has been a cultural melting pot with the Bantu Luhyia and the Nilotic Luo playing the most dominant part in the settlement and subsequent economic development of the region. Traditionally, the Luo and Luhyia have remained rivals even though there has been a lot of inter-marriages and other cultural and economic contacts between them. To a certain extent, each group has regarded the other as a "foreigner," but in actual fact, the great amount of labour mobility which was a consequence of the colonial rule brought about a lot of interaction between the various ethnic groups inhabiting the area. Previously, the whole region fell administratively into what was the Nyanza Province (North, Central and South Nyanza). This was later divided into the present Provinces of Western and Nyanza. They therefore share some common history which will be reflected upon when dealing with certain aspects of the cultural and religious conflicts which is the main subject of the present study.

Map I shows the location of the study area in the broad Kenyan context, and Map II gives a greater detail of the study area in Western Kenya. Finally Map III shows some of the major European mission stations which were the initial centres of the activities discussed in this thesis.
1:1 The Background

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, following the occupation of the region by the colonial powers, there was a gradual spread of Christianity in East Africa. In Kenya, the history of Christianity can be traced back to the arrival of Johann Ludwig Krapf in 1844 and Johann Rebmann in 1846. The two Germans were employees of the London Church Missionary Society (CMS). Krapf established the first mission station at Rabai at the coast in 1844. In 1860, the Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) also established a mission station at Ribe, a few kilometres from the port of Mombasa.

For the next thirty years the CMS and the MMS were the only active missionary groups in Kenya. Although their success in spreading Christianity was limited, these pioneer missionaries played an important role in the "exploration" of the interior of East Africa. As Welbourn has remarked, the missionary explorations "stirred the imagination of the British geographers and paved the way for those more ambitious journeys which in 1875 brought H.M. Stanley, and in 1877, CMS missionaries to the court of Kabaka Mutesa I of Buganda."

In the case of Western Kenya, Christian penetration in the early years of the 20th century came from two directions, namely from the coast in the East, and from Uganda in the West. The spread of Christianity in the region was facilitated by two factors. The first was the establishment of British colonial rule over Kenya from 1895 onwards. In that year, the British colonial authorities established an administrative headquarters at
Minias in an area to be known later as Western Kenya. Between 1895 and
1897, the British colonial authorities, using Minias as their military and
administrative base conquered Western Kenya and established an effective
colonial administration. This process of pacification was organized by
Charles Hobley, the District Commissioner who carried out a series of
punitive military expeditions in many parts of the region. These
expeditions covered present-day districts of Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega,
Siaya and Kisumu.7

The establishment of British colonial rule in Western Kenya
facilitated the spread of missionary activities into the region because of
the following reasons. First of all, the British authorities provided the
necessary security which guaranteed the safety of the missionaries. In
some cases government officials accompanied missionaries who went to
Western Kenya to set up mission stations. For example, Hotchkiss, of the
Friends African Mission (F.A.M.) was given escorts through the country of
the Nandi people.8 Also, the British colonial authorities encouraged
missionary activities because the missionaries were regarded as important
instruments in the introduction and development of Western education.
Indeed, before the 1930s, the British authorities almost entirely left the
establishment and development of schools in the hands of the Christian
Missions.9

The second factor which facilitated the spread of Christianity to
Western Kenya was the completion of the Uganda Railway which reached Kisumu
(Port Florence on L.Victoria) in 1901. As G.E.M. Ogutu has pointed out,
the extension of the Uganda Railway to Kisumu marked a turning point in the
social and religious history of Western Kenya." The completion of the railway was important because it facilitated the movement of the missionaries. As a result, various missionary groups began to flow into Western Kenya. This marked the beginning of the missionary "scramble" for the region.

Thus the introduction and spread of missionary and therefore church activity in Western Kenya, as indeed in the other parts of Kenya and the whole of the African continent, was preceded by an organized missionary work, which was in each case given a strong backing by the colonial administration.

Although the primary objective of the missionaries was to spread Christianity, their success depended largely on their approach and the response of the "natives" to their work.

As D.B. Barrett has noted, the coming of the Christian Missions in Sub-Saharan Africa and indeed Western Kenya, initially aroused widespread hopes among large numbers within various African communities. This was perhaps due to the persuasion strategy initially adopted by the Missionaries and their early courteous attitude towards the African communities.

This "marriage of convenience", however, soon gave way to an open attack by the missionaries on African Institutions which they considered unacceptable to European morality, thereby antagonizing the natives as
well as most of their adherents whom they had managed to convert over to Christianity.

Thus a general conflict developed as the Missionaries sought to tear people off from their traditional society and their way of life. As a result, large numbers of the African converts now realized with some bitterness that the hope aroused by the early days of Christian preaching would not materialize. Consequently, a wide sense of disappointment, uncertainty, and insecurity grew as hope was replaced by frustration and resentment.

It was indeed this sort of disillusionment with the established European-controlled churches that apparently gave rise to the subsequent dissent and forced some of the early converts to secede and establish their own churches. One of those African churches was the African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) which emerged in the 1940s in Western Kenya.

It was founded by Filemona Orwa who had been expelled from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Nyahera, and David Zakayo Kivuli who seceded from the Pentecostal Mission in Nyang'ori.

The history of the African Israel Church Nineveh is an important aspect of African independency which has been a subject of study by scholars of varied disciplines, such as anthropologists, sociologists, theologians and historians, in Kenya. The AICN is part and parcel of an ever-increasing number of independent churches. The phenomenon is that of continued schism even within the African Independent Churches themselves.
Since this phenomenon is so widespread in Kenya, it was felt that the AICN deserved a special study from a historical point of view.

1.2 **Statement of the problem**

Different scholars have dealt with the problem of church independency mainly within the context of the colonial situation and to a very limited extent in the context of the post-independence period. The emergence and growth of independent churches has been explained in terms of African People's responses to colonial political domination, economic exploitation and the general disparagement of the African culture. This would imply that independency was a way by which Africans sought to regain their political, economic and cultural independence through religious means. According to F.B. Welbourn and B.A. Ogot, they sought to create a "place to feel at home."\(^{17}\)

It is perhaps too simplistic to attribute the rise and growth of Church Independency to colonialism and racialism, because of the fact that Church Independency has continued to grow even in the post-independence times.

What immediately needs explanation thus is, the continued upsurge of African Independent Churches in many parts of Africa, even after the attainment of political independence. Were they, and are they, also prompted by factors other than political and cultural domination and economic exploitation? It is necessary to probe these alternative causes of the emergence and growth of the African Independent Churches. Thus, it
is with these key questions in mind that the in-depth examination of the African Israel Church Nineveh is undertaken, with the view to exposing the complexities of the process of African Church Independency.

The fact that independency has continued even after the attainment of political independence suggests either that colonialism was not the only factor which led to the establishment of Independent Churches or that political and cultural domination and economic exploitation have continued even after independence. If the first postulate is true, then we must find out what other key factors were. If the second alternative is true, then we must attempt to establish the relationships between church nurture in the pre-independence and post-independence periods.

Another problem we require to deal with is how independent churches perceived their environment, namely, how they related to members of other African and missionary-led churches, and the socio-political and economic values that moulded their thinking and aspirations. Were there church activities geared towards achieving these aspirations? We need answers to these questions, using as a paradigm for analysis and interpretation, the origins and the development of the African Israel Church Nineveh.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The problem of the phenomenon of independency has been exposed in the previous pages of this study. In order to tackle this problem, this study has certain objectives which are as follows:-
i) To trace the history of the AICN Church with a view to showing the significant factors which were primarily responsible for its emergence, as an independent church during the colonial period.

ii) To explain the questions of schism in the AICN, both before and after the attainment of political independence.

iii) To derive from the study of the AICN some general observations of principles and conclusions to explain independency as it affects the church in Kenya today and where possible in Africa as a whole.

1.4 Justification of the Study

i) The literature review in the next section clearly indicates a major gap in the understanding of Church Independency in Kenya. This study is an attempt to fill this gap. Out of the many independent churches in Western Kenya, we have selected the African Israel Church because of various factors. First, it is one of the independent church movements that has survived for more than forty years in the region, as opposed to many others that died out following the attainment of political independence. Secondly, it is one of the very widely spread African churches in Western Kenya, covering the Luhyia Districts of Bungoma, Kakamega and Busia, and most parts of the Luo-occupied areas of Kisumu, Siaya and South Nyanza Districts.
ii) An observation of the recent trends of scholarship shows that historians have increasingly adopted a tendency to study economic and political questions to the neglect of the equally important religious-historical issues, yet religion is a fundamental activity in peoples' experiences. This study attempts to redress the imbalance by focusing attention on one of the most interesting aspects of the history of Christianity in this country and Africa as a whole.

1.5 Literature Review

Independency is a complex phenomenon which has been analysed from a variety of perspectives.

Generally, and indeed according to D.B. Barrett, independency:

is a principle in which the individual congregation of church is an autonomous body, free from any ecclesiastical control..... may have seceded from the parent church to establish their freedom from the parent church's control or may have just formed an original indigenous church. 18 (emphasis mine)

Independent churches can be variously called, "spiritual" or "religious" movements, "prophetic" movements, "religious sects" and "protest" movements. According to C.G. Brown, they are a cultural reaction of African peoples seeking to rediscover themselves and their own kind of
life, which are expressed in religious terms, and which are claimed to be, and are in the vast majority of cases, essentially Christian in character.\textsuperscript{19}

Historiographically, D.B. Barrett's work, \textit{Schism and Renewal in Africa},\textsuperscript{20} is a pioneering attempt so far to analyse the phenomenon of Church Independency in the universal context. Barrett analyses about six hundred independent churches, distributed variously in the African continent. From this analysis he formulates a general theory which would explain independency. He starts off by identifying the various causative factors, among which are: missionary interference with crucial aspects of the African culture; the deeper understanding of the Bible by the Africans, particularly after the latter attain Western education; the paternalistic attitude of the European missionaries towards the African clergy and ordinary church members; the colonial situation, which includes political oppression and various forms of economic exploitation, such as land alienation, heavy taxation, forced labour; and lastly, the influence of independency amongst an adjacent ethnic group or within neighbouring states. The book is a major contribution to the study and the understanding of Church Independency in Africa.

The major problem with Barrett's book is that it suffers from too much generalization as it does not take into account the varying historical situations and local features which often dictate the manner in which people react to external stimuli.
Secondly, Barrett assumes that his explanations and conclusions have universal applicability throughout Africa. It would be interesting to find out if Western Kenya conforms to this general rule. One would like to investigate, for instance, the extent to which the experiences of the AICN conform to or refute Barrett's experiences, and theories.

Sundkler21 and Balandier22 have also outlined the factors which have facilitated the growth of Church Independency in Africa. With reference to independent churches in South Africa, Sundkler asserts that independent churches were aroused by the repressive policies in South Africa, land alienation and racial tensions. Balandier, on the other hand, asserts that at the root of independency in Zaire were disturbing colonial factors, such as economic exploitation and political oppression which were inherent within the colonial situation in Zaire. The same view was echoed by J.B. Webster,23 who also argued that Church Independency was primarily a revolt against imperialism, although it manifested itself in religious forms. In this view, these scholars are supported by Vittorio Lanternari,24 who also concluded that the main reasons for the rise of independent churches, was the quest by the oppressed people for freedom from subjection and servitude to foreign powers. He hastens to add that independency was also a reaction against the possibility of having the traditional culture destroyed and the society wiped out as a historical entity.

Another scholar, Daneel, in his book, Zionism and Faith Healing in Rhodesia, similarly referred to independent church movements as African political and nationalist movements. Oosthuizen,25 however, disputed the view that African church movements were political movements. Instead, he
noted that independency was a manifestation of a clash between the traditional African cultures and the Western missionary cultures. Oosthuizen, however, did not clearly show how the culture-conflict could give rise to independency. Secondly, he did not even spell out what he meant by culture-conflict, neither did he distinguish the difference between the political and the cultural movements. Political and Cultural Movements basically are aspects of the same phenomenon. They are ways by which people respond to the totality of their environment. It is therefore rather simplistic to characterize independent church movements as purely cultural.


Looking at the phenomenon from a sociological point of view, Muga concluded that independency was the result of the mistakes made by European missionaries in their attempt to convert the Africans. Consequently, Africans became resentful of certain aspects of Christianity that were introduced by the missionaries. In detail, Muga added that independency arose out of the introduction of social stratification by the colonial situation, in which the African was placed at the lowest stratum of the society.

This explanation may be valid, but may not be universal. It is a fact that in spite of the colonial situation, reactions of the Kenyan people to Christianity was not uniform. How would Muga explain the fact that despite
all the factors he mentioned, some people remained "pagans," others became devoted Christians, while others started independent churches?

Audrey Wipper also analysed two religious movements in Western Kenya—"Mumboism" among the Gusii and "Dini ya Msambwa" among the Luhyia. Among the factors that led to the rise of these two movements, Wipper discussed the following: the colonial experience; absence of means to articulate people's grievances; and the role of charismatic leadership.

Wipper's analysis, though very significant for a full understanding of church independency did not address itself to the historical dimension of this problem. This consequently renders the work inadequate from a historical point of view.

According to F.B. Welbourn, for a full understanding of independency, it is necessary that we think beyond the sociological category of group relations, that is, European versus African and Catholic versus Protestants. We need to research into the psychology of the individual in search of security or identity. Having mooted this idea in an earlier publication, the East African Rebels, Welbourn with B.A. Ogot employed it to analyse the activities of members of two independent churches and explained it in terms of the people's attempt to search for and establish a "place to feel at home."

Taken together, these works are important as they are useful references in our study of independent churches. However, apart from helping us to understand some of the effects of the colonial situation,
they fail to explain why there was independency in Europe during and after the Reformation which led to the formation of different denominations. More important for our purposes, they do not explain why independency as a movement is still rife in independent Africa.

More relevant to our particular study area are the works of F.B. Welbourn and B. Owaka who have both written on the AICN. Welbourn traced the history of the AICN from 1942 and stated that Zakayo Kivuli, who was a member of the Pentecostal Mission was given a blessing by the latter to start his own church. He notes further that Kivuli was able to hold together the ethnically disparate followers of the church, thereby creating a kind of oneness that was not typical of the Western Missions. He mentioned confessions, and dreams as important characteristics of the AICN.

Welbourn's work forms a useful foundation for the inquiry into the history of the AICN. It is, however, far from being exhaustive. For example, he does not try to venture into the background of the church, nor does he expose the factors that led to the formation of the AICN. Although Welbourn says that Kivuli formed the AICN with the consent and the blessing of the Canadian Pentecostal Mission, he does not clearly show or explain why the latter mission encouraged Kivuli. It would be interesting to investigate the causes and the implications of this "blessing," if it was indeed given!

More significantly, Welbourn's treatment of this subject is superficial in the sense that it is more of a biography of Kivuli rather than the history of the church itself. That is why, for example, he i
Silent about the significant role played by Filemona Orwa in the rise and the development of the AICN and the general development of the church.

B. Owaka on the other hand describes the establishment of the AICN in Nyanza in the 1940s. Unfortunately, Owaka's study was limited in its scope and content because of the fact that it was an extremely short piece of work, presented as a B.A. dissertation. Because of that, Owaka's study does not address itself to a thorough historical analysis of the AICN, and leaves many questions unanswered. Both works emphasised Kivuli's role almost to the total exclusion of Orwa's role, and this study partly set out to redress that mistake by paying more attention to Orwa's contribution to the development of the church.

The above literature review on the problem of Church Independency clearly shows that most scholars who have attempted to examine the subject have tended to deal with it largely in the context of colonial situation. Church independency has been explained mainly in terms of the conflicts inherent in a colonial situation, which included economic exploitation, cultural, and political domination.

The present study will show that phenomenon of church independency has continued to exist even in the post-colonial period, and therefore it is necessary to fathom the complexity of the phenomenon by examining a whole spectrum of other factors which may explain the dynamics of independency in a more satisfactory manner.

Although the findings in the study will derive from a case study of the AICN the findings may be found to be applicable to the rest of Kenya and even to other parts of Africa.
1.6 Conceptual Framework

Our analysis of the AICN movement will be undertaken within the framework of change and continuity particularly as these impinge on peoples attitudes, responses and adaptation to new situations. As we have mentioned in the previous paragraphs of this chapter, the study of the AICN is the study of people's attitudes, responses and adaptation to experiences within their religio-socio-cultural environment. Following from our argument in the problem statement section, one wishes to question what African churchmen were seeking independence from.

Our first premise is that peoples attitudes, responses and adaptations to situations are influenced by their perceptions and evaluation of them in terms of their relevance to their lives. It is on this basis that people may resort to one of the following: acceptance, rejection, accommodation, and indifference. This is a mental process that takes time. And because situations change over time, people's attitude and responses also change. For instance, one may start off by rejecting an idea or a situation, but after perceiving its value, there may be a change of attitude to that of acceptance. Similarly, indifference may also gradually change to accommodation. It is this mental process of perception and evaluation which influenced people's attitudes and responses to Christianity, and ultimately their adaptation to both the missionary and the colonial situations.
Our second premise is that adaptations to situations are varied over time. According to R.K. Merton, adaptations take the following forms: conformity, innovation, retreat and rebellion.30

Merton's analysis is adopted here because it provides a comprehensive approach to a study of people's responses and adaptations to situations. It views both society and man as constantly changing, rather than being static. With regard to our study, this is a useful approach since we will concern ourselves with changes which took place in the wider society, amongst the people and within the AICN. These changes were significant because they influenced changes in peoples responses to the church both in the short-run and in the long-run. They led to conformity among those who remained within the church, rebellion and innovation among those who moved away from the church to establish an independent church based on a compromise between what they had learnt in the previous church and new ideas discovered by their leaders; and finally retreat amongst those who first became members of the church, but later decided to have nothing to do with Christianity as preached by both the missionary and the independent churches.

We are by no means suggesting that people's attitudes, responses and adaptations were all the times neatly divided into the forms we have outlined. There occurred changes in the way people perceived and felt about their surrounding. This was prompted by the fact that situations changed, people also changed, thereby also further changing their situations. May be it is this that explains the upsurge of independent church movements both before and after the attainment of independence in
many parts of Africa. And it is within this framework of reference that we look at changes that took place in the AION at its inception during the colonial period, after independence, and after the death of Kivuli.

1.7 Hypotheses

For the purposes of analysis in this study, three hypotheses have been put forward:

i) The emergence of the African Israel Church Nineveh was not a unique phenomenon but just another case of church independency amongst the Protestant Churches in Kenya.

ii) The inherent separation in the Protestant Churches was influenced by the colonial set-up and adherent's responses to the pre-independence and post-independence situations.

iii) The crisis of succession is an important internal factor in explaining the dynamics of Church Independency.

1.8 Research Methodology and Problems encountered

A research project like the present one must rely on many sources both primary and secondary. Secondly, since many of the actors in the historical developments traced in the study are still alive, much use was made of the personal interviews as well as on-the-spot observation as research techniques.
Finally, every effort was made to locate government officials concerned with the administrative aspects of the matters being researched, and to interview them as well as to gather any valuable written information in their possession which might have been of use to the study.

For secondary data much use was made of published and unpublished sources available in the various libraries in Nairobi, Departmental and the National Archives, as well as, smaller libraries located in Kisumu and Kakamega. Use was also made of the personal papers of individuals who may have had some valuable contacts with the AICN, as well as of church records which included minutes of administrative meetings wherever these were found to be in existence. Church publications, media reports and journals were all found to be extremely useful in providing the background information, and even in the clarification of points which may have been unclear at the beginning.

In the process of consulting secondary data, the aim was to obtain basic information about the history of Independent Church Movements in general, for the whole of Kenya and, in some cases, for other African countries where the same phenomenon is present. In this particular case much interest was naturally concentrated on the materials on the African Israel Church Nineveh. Having established the historical background from secondary sources, great reliance had, however, to be put on primary sources.

In this case, the methodology adopted included oral interviews on a sample of selected members of the AICN, located in Nyang'ori, Maragoli,
Bunyore and Tiriki areas of Kakamega District, and Kisumu, Seme, Kano, and Nyakach areas of Kisumu District. Both Districts, and all the locations were to be found in Western Kenya, the study area. The sampling technique used involved interviewing prominent church officials and members at the headquarters of the AICN in Nyang'ori and Kisumu locations, as well as randomly selected church members spread over the various locations which have been named above, where church congregations and church adherents are to be found in large numbers. Care was taken to ensure that a good sample of church leaders in the original Nineveh home of the church was included in those to be interviewed, as well as those belonging to the so-called "Splinter Group," who are based at Ramba in what has become known as the "Kisumu Diocese" of the AICN.

In addition to interviews directed at the "Larger Groups" based at the two centres of the church, interviews were also arranged with selected members and leaders of the Pentecostal Missions with their base at Nyang'ori, and with the CMS group, largely based at Maseno and Kisumu. In so far as the AICN can be seen as a breakaway movement from the Pentecostal and CMS missions, these other interviews cast a lot of light on the processes and forces which led to the formation of the AICN, and thus enabled the researcher to get a more wholesome picture of the role played by various organizations and actors in bringing about the rise of the AICN. Two persons played a decisive role in the birth of the AICN. These were the late Zakayo Kivuli, and Filemona Orwa, who is still alive. As it was possible to carry out several extended interviews with Filemona Orwa, he has been used in this study as a vital source of information, and at the same time, the researcher used him a lot during on the spot observations, a
methodology which has contributed a lot to the focusing of the present study.

No questionnaires were used throughout the period of fieldwork. Instead, the researcher relied heavily on pre-formulated questions as a guide to obtaining systematic data. In this respect, heavy reliance was placed on the taking of comprehensive field notes as well as the use of tape recordings of lengthy conversations with those being interviewed. The taped materials were transcribed, and the salient points taken down in note form to help with interpretation during the writing of the thesis. In conclusion all the selected methods used proved extremely useful in the process of writing of the present thesis. Where there were some doubts as to data collected, it became necessary to go back to the field for brief periods to obtain clarifications or any additional points that were needed. Thus the researcher was satisfied that the methods selected were adequate because they yielded a wealth of material which has been used in a much shortened form to prepare the present thesis.

Finally, it was found out during fieldwork that there was a serious lack of written information or even documents which could be used to guide the research. Consequently the author relied heavily on oral sources as the basis of findings and conclusions for the study.

Because of limitations of funds and time fieldwork could only be carried out for a limited period with the realisation that it may not have been exhaustive enough.
FOOTNOTES


6. Until 1902, Western Kenya was part of the Uganda Protectorate. This may explain why some of the missionary groups came from Buganda.


12. Ibid., pp. 16-31

13. Ibid., pp. 16-31


15. D.B. Barrett, op.cit., pp. 16-31


2.0 Introduction

The study of the emergence of the African Israel Church Nineveh in Western Kenya must take into account the introduction and spread of Christianity in the region. In this chapter, it is our intention to trace how Christianity spread in Western Kenya, and to show what impact it had on the African communities in the region. Furthermore, the chapter will also show the number of missionary groups that were involved in the region, and their main activities, as well as how the Africans responded to the challenges of Christianity.

2.1 The Religions and Cultural Background of Western Kenya

Before discussing the spread of Christianity in Western Kenya and its impact on African communities, it is necessary to give a brief account of the traditional religions and the basic cultures of the African people in the region, prior to the introduction of Christianity. This section does not, however, aim at giving a comprehensive account of the cultures and religions of the people, but rather, to pin-point those aspects of the African cultures and religions which clashed with the European culture and Christianity.
Religion was very central in all pre-colonial African societies. The people of Western Kenya were no exception in this important generalization. The traditional religion of the people did not require any form of evangelization like it was the case with Christianity because the African traditional religion was propagated internally at the family level. It was lived rather than learnt or taught. The function of religion was to "maintain the tribe in its proper relationship with itself and its constituent parts". In other words, religion was meant to keep the social order, to explain the interaction of man and his environment and, above all, to explain the mysteries of life and death. It was not possible for one to choose which religion to belong to. Once one was born a Luo or a Luhyia, one could not escape the "Supernatural forces relevant to the tribe."

Before the coming of the Christian missionaries, the people of Western Kenya had the conception of the "Supreme Being." He was called Nyakalaga (the one found everywhere) or Nyasaye (the one who is adored) amongst the Luo, and Were, Nyasaye or Nasaye amongst the Luhyia. He played the important roles of creating, protecting, and sustaining the communities. Although God's place of abode was unknown, and although no direct communication with Him was possible except through the intermediaries, God was always assumed to be present around the people, and to have a constant relationship with them in their day-to-day operations.

The acts of worship in the traditional mode, involved offering of sacrifice either at the family, clan or communal shrines, depending on whether the prayers were personal to the family or involved the whole clan.
and the entire community. The performance of such rituals were often led by family or clan head, or even by Ajuoke (medicinemen), whose roles in the community equalled those of the modern priests. Apart from officiating in important communal rituals, Ajuoke were also healers and diviners. They also performed the functions of prophets with the insight to identify the unknown and had powers to prophesy about the future. Except when consulted privately, Ajuoke were not paid any fee for the roles they played in the family, clan, or communal rituals.

Some Ajuoke acquired their professional techniques either by learning the process of divination from a family member, or through inheritance. While some Ajuoke were confined to their localities, others such as Mumbo in Sakwa operated far beyond their communities on the eve of colonialism.

The people of Western Kenya also believed in ancestor worship. They believed that the dead played important roles in the lives of the living. Any misfortune in a family or community such as drought, bad harvests, epidemics, and even death, was explained in terms of the anger or annoyance of the ancestral spirits. It was therefore necessary to ensure that these spirits were not offended. Whenever a calamity befell a family or community, the advice of the diviners was often sought and they prescribed the necessary measures to appease the angered spirit. The end of the misfortune was interpreted as a manifestation of the acceptance of the sacrifices that had been offered to the spirit.

The practice of magic and medicine, accompanied by the performance of ritual was also part and parcel of the religious system of the people of
Western Kenya. A family believed that one of them had been betwitched whenever all types of medicines had been tried on a patient in vain. A witchdoctor or a diviner was often consulted for diagnosis and the latter prescribed the necessary ritual to remedy the situation. Magic played a significant role in the community because it enabled the traditional Africans to understand and cope with the complications, and the riddles of life and gave them mastery over environmental conditions.

Religion was therefore the core of all human life; and the beliefs and practices with regard to the supernatural world played a fundamental role in the Western Kenyan communities. It explained the mysteries in the universe and laid down norms for the relations between man and the world, and between man and his fellow men. It was a focus of unity.

One of the widely practised cultures in Western Kenya was the institution of polygamy. In the context of marriage, polygamy clearly illustrated how important the institution of marriage was. In the African communities, the position of spinster and single parenthood was discouraged. Polygamy was therefore regarded as a useful function of ensuring that every adult joined the institution of marriage. Polygamy was also important because many wives and children provided an abundant source of labour. Furthermore, due to the high child mortality rate prior to the coming of modern medicine, the people of Western Kenya preferred to have many children which polygamy provided.

Closely related to polygamy was the practice of wife inheritance (remarriage of widows). This practice provided some form of social
security both for the widows and the children of the deceased. It ensured that the union that had been formed by the marriage was kept intact. In this way, the stability, continuation and the unity of the clans, lineages and the entire communities were ensured.

Initiation and circumcision ceremonies were also important aspects of the cultural practices of the people of Western Kenya. Before actual circumcision (for boys) and clitoridectomy (for girls) among some Luhya groups, the initiates went through a period of seclusion for about three months. In the case of the Luo, there was no formal circumcision ceremony as such, but the extraction of six lower teeth for both boys and girls during the nak ceremony marked the formal transition of the youth into adult life.¹⁰

During the initiation period, the initiates were taught, among other things, the history of the clan, the cyclic system of the age sets, the secrets of respecting the ancestors, matters of sexual life, marriage, procreation, and family responsibility.¹¹

Apart from introducing the youth into adulthood, initiation was important in several ways. First, after initiation, the new adult now entered a position of responsibility and new obligations were expected of him by the community. Secondly, it was also a physical training to overcome difficulties of pain and to cultivate courage, endurance, perseverance and obedience. As J.S. Moiti observes, "it equipped them mentally, bodily, emotionally, and morally for adulthood."¹² Until, and
unless an individual went through initiation and circumcision ceremony, he was considered as a baby in the community.

It is against this background of deep-rooted African cultures and values that the fortunes of Christianity in the region have to be examined. As we shall see later in this chapter, the African traditional religions and the cultures of the people of Western Kenya to a very large extent dictated the form in which the Africans responded to Christianity.

2.2. The Missionary Penetration of Western Kenya

The missionary penetration of Western Kenya began in the early years of the 20th century. The first Christian Mission to be established in the region was the Friends African Industrial Mission (FAIM), later known as the Friends African Mission (FAM). This was an affiliate of the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions. This missionary group included Edgar T. Hole, and Arthur B. Ghilson, and it was led by Willis Ray Hotchkiss who had already worked in Kitui in the 1890s for the African Inland Mission (AIM). Hotchkiss and his group first arrived in Mombasa in June 1902, and went straight to Kisumu the following month where they were warmly received by government officials. These officials gave them guides to accompany them to Kaimosi where they established the first mission station in August 1902. The following year, Hotchkiss was joined by Mrs Hole and her daughter, and Dr and Mrs Elisha Blackburn. Between 1903 and 1914, the F.A.M. established other stations at Vihiga, Liraunda and Malava in the present-day Kakamega District.
The second group of Christian missionaries to penetrate Western Kenya was the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers (M1D4) who were trained at the Mill Hill College in London. These fathers had passed through Western Kenya in 1895 on their way to Uganda. During this journey, Father Rogan had expressed interest in the people of Western Kenya, noting that the latter needed to be "brought under the Yoke of Christ in order to be taught some form of civilization."16

In 1903, the Catholics opened a church at Kisumu to cater for Catholics already in the town. In 1904, Fathers Brandsma and Bauma of the Mill Hill Mission opened a station at Ojola. The Ojola station consisted of simple buildings which served as a school, a cook's house and a boys' hostel. This marked the beginning of the Roman Catholic evangelization in the area. Between 1906 and 1914, mission stations were opened at Mukumu, Aluor in Gem and Eregi in Maragoli.17

The third mission station in the area was established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Like their Catholic rivals, the CMS missionaries also came from the direction of Uganda. The CMS's first interest in Western Kenya goes back to 1892, and was first expressed by Bishop Tucker, the CMS Bishop of Equatorial Africa. In September 1892, he passed through Western Kenya on his way from Uganda and stressed the urgency of spreading Christianity to the people in this region. He appealed to the Christians in England to consider sending a Mission to Western Kenya. He wrote:

*Can nothing be done for Kavirondo? If only Christians of home could see us surrounded by swarms of these ignorant*
People, and unable even to promise them a chess, they could, surely have pity on us and provide the men and means for this vast field and most blessed and Christ-like work. 18

However, Tucker's prayers were not answered until a CMS station was set up in 1904 at Vihiga in Kakamega. In fact it has been suggested that the arrival of the CMS in Kenya was a continuation of the Catholic-Anglican rivalry which had begun in Uganda as early as 1879.19 In 1905, the CMS Mission was transferred to Maseno because Vihiga had been too close to the F.A.M. station at Kaimosi. Between 1905 and 1919, CMS stations were established at Kisumu, Butere and Ng'iya.

Closely following the heels of the CMS was the arrival of the South Africa Compound and Interior Mission (SACIM). This mission was sponsored by A.W. Baker of South Africa and it was led by Robert Wilson. Its first mission was established at Kima in 1905. Another South African sponsored mission, the Nilotic Independent Mission (NIM) was also established at Ogada by Miss Dorothea Boldt in 1906.20 In 1908, she was joined by two friends, Mr and Mrs Innes, both of whom had worked in South Africa amongst the Zulus.21

A more important mission was the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), later renamed the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (P.A.G.). The mission was established in Western Kenya in 1924 by Mr and Mrs O.C. Keller at Nyang'ori.22 As shall be seen later in the subsequent chapters of this study, the origins to the AICN in the form of the spirit movement can be traced to this mission.
The multiplicity of Christian missionaries operating so close to each other, in so small an area brought competition and rivalry as the various missionary groups tried to carve for themselves "spheres of influence." This cut-throat competition among the Christian missions for converts often led to conflicts. In certain cases, it even resulted in physical confrontation among the converts.

The Christian missions themselves appreciated these shortcomings. As a result, they sought ways of minimizing conflicts and rivalries. Thus, in 1907, they held a conference at Vihiga. At the conference, an agreement which tentatively partitioned the region amongst the various protestant missions was reached. According to this agreement, the CMS and the NIM were to work amongst the Luo, while the FAM and the SACIM were to focus their work on the Luhyia. Still, the Vihiga Agreement did not diminish the rivalries between the protestant missions, nor did it bring unity amongst the Christian converts. The MIM were not party to this Agreement.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Christianity was introduced into Western Kenya in fragmented forms, and in certain cases, it was a personal and a one man show rather than a group activity. This was to have serious implications for the emergence of Independent African Churches like the AICN. The fragmentation and the multiplicity of the missions were historically significant because Africans began to see Christianity not as a monolithic doctrine but as various competing groups. This might have in one way influenced the African Christians like Filemona Orwa and Zakayo Kivuli to aspire for establishing their own churches.
2.3 The Activities and the Impact of the Missions

The missionaries, once established in Western Kenya, were engaged in several activities. Apart from spreading Christianity, they also found it pertinent to engage in educational programmes. Schools were an important method used by the Missions to impart Christianity.

Initially, evangelization went hand in hand with the establishment of schools. The schools were convenient instruments for converting Africans to Christianity. They were a primary medium of transmitting religious instruction and spreading Western values. Education was also considered necessary because it enabled the African converts to read the Bible. Thus, reading and writing became indispensable in the process of evangelization.

Through the schools, the missionaries got their first converts. Since the missionaries initially found it difficult to recruit school children on their own because of the suspicion with which the communities viewed their activities, they sought the assistance of the chiefs in popularizing and spreading education. The chiefs were used not only to recruit school children, but also to ensure that all children regularly attended schools once recruited. The parents on their part were required to provide the schools with building material, food and clothing for their children.24

The school curriculum mainly consisted of Bible stories, songs, and the Alphabet. Other subjects included Arithmetic, Geography, Agriculture, Hygiene, Carpentry and Industrial Work. But religion remained the core of the curriculum.25
It was the graduates of these mission schools who played a very significant role in the process of evangelization in Western Kenya. After the initial training, the boys were sent back to their localities to spread the word of God and to recruit more converts. One such graduate was Yona Omolo who was trained at the CMS, Maseno station. He was sent back to his home area in Yimbo. He taught and spread Christianity in his Yimbo Location and neighbouring areas and he succeeded in building and opening local CMS stations at Pala and Ugwena.26

The various schools that were founded by the missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic were spread throughout the region. These included Maseno School (CMS) founded in 1906, Butere Boys and Girls (CMS) in 1913, Ng'iya Girls School (CMS) in 1919, Mukumu School (MHM) in 1921, Kakamega Mukumu School (MHM) in 1925, St. Mary's Yala (MHM) 1927, Nyakach School (AIM) 1932, Ogada (AIM) 1906, and Kaimosi College (FAM) in 1925.27

The development of medical services was another area where the missionaries played a major role. These were available to the African converts and non-converts alike, though preference was given to expectant mothers and small children. Between 1906 and 1939, several mission hospitals and medical centres were started in many parts of Western Kenya. These were, Maseno Hospital (CMS) in 1906, Nyabondo Hospital (MHM) in 1925, Nyakach Hospital (AIM) in 1932, Ogada Medical Centre (AIM) in 1908 and Mukumu Hospital (MHM) in 1928.28

Apart from education and health, the missionaries also aimed at economic self-sufficiency. A number of agricultural and industrial
projects were established in and around the mission stations. The CMS had about 855 acres of land at Maseno; 858 for the FAM at Kaimosi; 109.09 and 36.6 acres for the NIM at Ogada. On these extensive land holdings the missionaries used African labour to grow crops such as maize and sisal and raise livestock. As a result, considerable income was generated to run the missions.

In their efforts to spread Christianity, the missionaries launched an offensive against the African religions and the cultural practices. Given their upbringing and training the pioneer missionaries did not distinguish the essence of Christianity from other facets of Western Culture and Civilization.

The missionaries did not understand and respect African traditional religions. They saw these religions as obstacles to the spread of Christianity and to the process of modernization. Most missionaries believed that it was necessary to destroy African religions and cultural values and to replace them with Western civilization.

The missionaries also failed to realize the significance of the rigid observance of the tribal rituals and taboos. Yet it was through this system that "all members of a particular tribe from kings and chiefs down to the lowest and most insignificant individual were bound together as one organic whole." Their belief in their cultural superiority led them to condemn most aspects of the African culture. The missionaries insisted that every African convert must abandon African traditions, customs,
beliefs, and accept wholesale the Western way of life and code of conduct without question or qualification.

Some of the Christian demands were so extreme that many would-be African converts regarded them as intolerable. As we shall see shortly, this sweeping condemnation of the traditional African way of life inevitably provoked resentment and hostility from some sections of the African population.

The following examples clearly indicate the missionaries' negative attitude towards African traditions, culture, and customs. First of all, the missionaries condemned the institution of polygamy and the payment of dowry which was seen as bride price. Greater attempts were made to ensure that the African converts did not continue with their traditional cultures especially in the period before 1939. For example, between 1913 and 1936, the CMS church at Maseno made it a policy not to baptise the children of polygamous parents, and even went further to demand that polygamous converts divorce all except one of their wives. Many African converts found such requirements impracticable to meet because they would symbolize abandoning their social obligations. Furthermore, as the African converts gradually began to read and interpret the Bible, they found no religious justification for the missionary condemnation of polygamy and wife inheritance. On the contrary, they discovered that certain great biblical personalities like David and Solomon were in fact polygamous.

The Pentecostal Missionaries' attitude towards female circumcision among the Nyang'ori of Western Kenya best expresses the negative attitudes
of the missionaries against the African culture, customs and practices. They wrote:

--- Female circumcision is a heathen rite. No girl can pass through this custom and be clean or have a clean mind. The old heathen take the young girls --- from 10-12 years of age and seclude them in the forest for three months, they are taught everything that is devilish, unclean and according to fleshy lusts ... Only God is able to break this superstition.

All African converts were therefore required to refrain from the African practices which did not conform to the teachings of Christianity and those who did not do so were threatened with excommunication and expulsion from the church. The OES ruled, for example in 1923, that if any of its agents took part in native dancing, they would be dismissed. The AIM similarly ruled in 1924 that abstinence from drinking was a necessary condition for baptism.

The missionaries therefore regarded themselves as people who had come to redeem the Africans from their "heathen" cultures, beliefs, customs; to civilize and to teach them the notion of God.

Keller wrote in 1925:

The fight is on against sin and the devil against the devil and wickedness, corruption and vice ... Here we see the power of the devil in its astonishing form, almost beyond belief.

These words illustrate the fact that it was a common verdict amongst the European Missionaries that the African beliefs, ritual observances and cultural practices, were ungodly and primitive, and therefore it was the
duty of the missionaries to impart Christianity and replace the primitive way of life of the Africans with European values and culture.

In fairness to the missions and missionaries, it should be pointed out that not all of them assumed a hostile stance towards the African customs and traditions. Some of the missions and individual missionaries sought to understand and to accommodate some aspects of African way of life and to identify with the local African populations. In general, protestant missions tended to be more intolerant than the Roman Catholics to the traditional African way of life. This partly explains why schism became much more prevalent in the protestant churches than in the Roman Catholic Church. Elizabeth Nzioki has observed that some individual missionaries like Reverend Pleydell adopted a more positive attitude towards the Africans and this won him respect amongst the local people. Otherwise the overall general hostility to African traditions and culture, especially as practised by the Protestant Missionaries succeeded in alienating many Africans. The African response will now be treated in the next section of this study.

2.4. **The African Response**

The African response to the imposition of Christianity was not uniform. Some were hostile from the very beginning while others were receptive. Others tried to reconcile the traditional and the Christian practices. In most cases, the responses were dictated by the position of the mission station, the type of catechists and the nature of the initial
converts. But the decisive factor was the missionary attitude towards the African cultural practices, beliefs and customs.

From the outset, the Christian religion and Western culture were presented as a completely new way of life which was incompatible with the existing African society. This provoked severe hostility from the African elders who had been the custodians of the traditional cultural practices and beliefs which had been handed down from generation to generation. They quickly saw the danger of destruction of the African way of life which the imposition of the new ideas threatened. Many of them did not only refuse to attend the missionary teachings, but also prevented the youth from doing so.

Several informants interviewed during fieldwork stressed the intensity of African resentment against the Christian Missions. Some Africans accused the missions of seeking to enslave the African by destroying his culture and imposing an alien culture.

It is therefore not surprising that before 1920, the missionaries found it difficult to make tangible inroads into African society. The results of their evangelization did not match their efforts. The Africans were still sceptical, if not hostile, to the new alien religion. As a result, Africans were reluctant to embrace Christianity. The missionaries found it difficult to recruit pupils into the newly established mission schools. For instance, in 1906, there were six students at the Maseno mission school. By 1911, the mission had recruited only a mere one hundred and twenty students. In fact, in certain cases, the missionaries through
the local colonial chiefs had to use coercive methods to recruit students and to ensure attendance in those schools. 39

After 1920, the number of school children in mission schools considerably increased because some Africans especially those living near the mission schools were beginning to appreciate the material, if not the spiritual benefits of Christianity, like literacy, medical services and employment opportunities. 40 With the introduction of money economy and the high rate of poll and hut tax, education became the means by which to acquire the necessities of life. Thus, in most cases Africans sought mission-controlled education not because of their enthusiasm about Christianity but because education offered access to wage employment. The colonial administration recruited clerks, policemen and chiefs from the graduates of mission schools, and thus, indirectly, coerced many more young people to join the mission schools as a means of getting access to such employment.

In our area of study, the Maragoli and the Tiriki seemed to have responded to Christianity with more enthusiasm than the rest of the population in the whole region. They enrolled in the Friends Mission, the Church of God, and the Pentecostal schools in large numbers. This sort of response could be explained by the fact that polygamy, one of the common African practices which disqualified many would-be converts from being converted to Christianity, was already a dying institution among the Maragoli and the Tiriki on the eve of missionary penetration of Western Kenya. Thus, many of them found access to the missionary churches and mission schools without much difficulty. In comparison, the spread of
Christianity among the Nyang'ori was much slower in the period, before 1940. This was mainly because of the hostility with which the Pentecostal missionaries treated their customs, traditions and cultural practices.

Even some of those Africans who were initially enthusiastic and excited about the new religion soon found themselves in conflict with the teaching of Christianity. They were expected and required to discard their own cultures and beliefs and adopt the Western cultural values which seemed indispensable to a true understanding of Christianity. Although they tried at the beginning to be true Christians, they discovered that the new culture and their conversion to Christianity had resulted in the loss of their identities, and traditional values as the missionaries threatened the time-honoured cultural patterns and religious modus vivendi causing conflicts with, and alienation from the old bonds of unity. The resulting cultural vacuum created by Christianity gradually began to repel the new converts.

Furthermore, from the African point of view, the hypocrisy of the Christian missionaries themselves became inconceivable. The time came when the African converts began to compare the behaviour of the missionaries with the doctrines of the missionary churches. They discovered that the missionaries behaved and treated their converts contrary to what their religions advocated. With the translation of the Bible into the vernaculars, the people of Western Kenya also realized a discrepancy between the missionary teachings and the teachings of the Bible. The missions appeared to emphasize only those aspects of the Bible which justified their domineering characteristics.
a result of all these, there was a growing disenchantment and disillusionment among some African converts in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the converts gradually became syncretic, so that although they attended church services, they continued to live according to their customs; practising polygamy, and consulting 'witchdoctors' whenever they were faced with a crisis. The missionaries responded to such "deviations" by either refusing the "offenders" sacraments or expelling them from the church. At that stage, it was a natural development that some of the African converts began to explore the means by which to escape from the rigidities of orthodox Christianity as preached by the missionaries.

It is against this background of the spread of Christianity and the gradual African disillusionment and disaffection with the missionary attacks on the African cultural values, that some Africans began to establish their own independent churches. The first of these was the Nomiya Luo Church which was established in 1912 by Johana Owalo in Western Kenya. Others included Dini ya Msambwa, and Mumboism. By the 1930s, there was already a proliferation of breakaway African "protest churches" in Western Kenya, caused by the conflicts already portrayed in the foregoing pages. It is therefore against this background that the rise and development of the African Israel Church must be subsequently examined in the following pages of this study.
FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid., p. 3.


7. In most cases, the remedy required the offering of sacrifices to the ancestors. This was often in the form of meat or beer.


11. Interview with Walucho Buriah on 21st February 1987 at Kakamega.


16. Father Rogan was probably stunned by the fact that the people of Kisumu walked about naked. see Ogutu, *Ibid.*, p. 57.


22. *ibid.*, pp. 108-109


29. See Kisumu District Annual Report, 1912-1913 and 1919-1920. *Kenya national Archives*. DC/CN/1/5/1 and 1/5/2.


32. Interview with Charles Kungu, Pastor of the Anglican Church, on 19th September 1986 at Ramba; interview with F. Orwa on 21st September 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Miriam Amuli on 14th January 1987 at Bunyore; and interview with Shadrack Kiptuli on 7th March 1987 at Kapsoai.


CHAPTER THREE

THE RISE OF THE AFRICAN ISRAEL CHURCH NINEVEH IN WESTERN KENYA

3.0 Introduction

It is against the background of the introduction and spread of Christianity in Western Kenya, and the gradual African disillusionment and disaffection with the missionary attack on their cultures and traditions that the African Independent Churches, including the African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) began to emerge and grow in the 1920s and 1930s.

The AICN was established between 1941 and 1942. The pioneer students of the church have asserted that the AICN was founded in 1942 by David Zakayo Kivuli of Nyang'ori Location, Kakamega District. They have also claimed that it was primarily a product of the "spirit" (Pentecostal) Movement which emerged in Western Kenya in the 1920s. Accordingly, the AICN has been represented as a "Breakaway Movement" from the Pentecostal Missions. However, the research findings of this study show that the origins of the AICN were more diverse than the previous scholars have hitherto suggested.

This chapter traces the origins of the AICN in the period before 1942. It argues that although the spiritual origins of the AICN can be traced to
the "Spirit Movement" in the Pentecostal church, that Movement was not the only force behind the emergence of the AICN. The available evidence indicates that the rise of the AICN was due to three interrelated factors. The first of these was the Spirit Movement. The rise of the church was also due not only to the activities of Zakayo Kivuli but also those of another actor, namely Filemona Orwa from Nyahera, Kisumu District. The evidence also shows that the AICN was partly a breakaway movement from the CMS, and not only from the Pentecostal Church as previously asserted.

3.1 The Emergence of the Pentecostal Movement in Western Kenya

The Spirit (Pentecostal) Movement began in America in April 1906 "...among believers who sought a baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues similar to instances recorded in the Acts of the Apostles". From America, the Movement spread rapidly into many parts of the world including Kenya.

In Western Kenya, the Pentecostal Movement was introduced by Mr. Clyde Miller in 1909. He established the first Pentecostal Mission at Nyang'ori in Kakamega District. Miller ran the Missions until 1924 when he was replaced by Otto Keller. In that year, the Mission became known as the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). The establishment of the Pentecostal Mission in Western Kenya marked a turning point in the religious history of the region. It was a turning point in the sense that it directly led to the emergence and spread of the "Spirit Movement" not only in the area but also in other parts of the
country. The Movement spread rapidly not only within the Pentecostal Mission but also in other Protestant denominations as well.4

The Spirit Movement received fresh impetus in November 1926 when an inter-denominational Conference, organized by the Friends African Mission was held at Kaimosi. During that Conference, Chilson and Ford of the Friends African Mission as well as Keller of the PAOC were the most influential speakers. Chilson, who had experienced the birth of the Pentecostal Movement in America, preached with great energy and moved the audience to tremendous excitement. It was the Kaimosi meeting which led to the revival of the Spirit Movement in Western Kenya.

The Spirit Movement attracted some people in Western Kenya for the following reasons. First, it adopted forms of worship which were familiar to the Africans and which in many ways were consistent with African culture.5 For example, the singing sessions were as spontaneous as the traditional dancing ceremonies of the people of Western Kenya. This brought tremendous excitement amongst the converts.

Secondly, the spiritual revivalism was also an attempt to escape from the harsh realities of colonial rule. The people of Western Kenya had been bewildered by forced labour, high taxation and the Kipande system. They had also suffered from the economic frustrations of the Great Depression following the First World War. As Philomena Njeri has rightly observed, spiritual revivalism is a common phenomenon during times of social stress. In times of crisis, people need some supernatural relief from the existing hardships.6
Finally, the spread of the Spirit Movement was due to the growth of literacy and the translation of the Bible into local languages. Unlike the Roman Catholics, the Protestant Missions allowed their followers to read and interpret the Bible. Accordingly, during the 1920s, many Africans had access to the Bible, and they began to notice, as they read, discrepancies between the theory and the practices of Christianity in Western Kenya. They noticed that the missionaries were using the Bible rather selectively; choosing only those aspects which seemed to support their case, and leaving out the rest.

The Spirit Movement gained momentum in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It spread to many Protestant churches in Western Kenya, and attracted a considerable following within these churches. It was these groups who embraced the teachings of the Spirit Movement that provided the foundation on which the AICN emerged.

In Kisumu District, the Spirit Movement gained a foothold at the Nyahera CMS station and by the late 1930s, it had attracted considerable influence at that station. The group which was known as the Jo-Roho was founded and led by Filemona Orwa who became one of the founders of the AICN.

What then was the historical significance of the Spirit Movement in the rise of the AICN or how was the Spirit Movement related to the activities of Filemona Orwa and Zakayo Kivuli?
The Spirit Movement was the basis of Kivuli and Orwa's ecclesiastical take-off. As has been stated earlier, a distinct group of people who believed in the teachings of the Spirit Movement already existed in their respective churches. It was from these groups that Orwa and Kivuli drew most of their initial support. In other words, the Spirit Movement provided the believers with a sense of commonality and thus bound them together. What remained for this already inspired flock was the leadership which could provide them with a new and proper direction. Once this was found in Filemona Orwa and Zakayo Kivuli, the march forward began immediately and the two men found themselves as the automatic leaders of those who embraced the doctrines of the Spirit Movement. The significance of the Spirit Movement in the formation of the AICN was underscored by the fact that the primary doctrine of the Spirit Movement, which was itself the belief in the Holy Spirit, became the underlying doctrine of the AICN. At the same time, the AICN's emphasis on the drums, bells and dancing as legitimate instruments and forms of worship was directly borrowed from the Spirit Movement.

Since Filemona Orwa played a vital role in the rise of the AICN, it is worthwhile to trace his career and activities in the period before 1942, to help illuminate later assertions about his true role in the foundation of the church.

3.2 Filemona Orwa and the Rise of the African Israel Church Nineveh

To understand Orwa's role in the founding of the AICN, it is necessary to give an account of the factors which shaped his religious
beliefs and attitudes in the period before 1942. These were his family background, his life at school, his working experience as a migrant labourer, his education at Kabete and his experience with his friend and workmate, Zakayo Kivuli.

Filemona Orwa was the co-founder of the AICN. He was born of a monogamous family. His father's name was called Ogonda son of Andere, while his mother was known as Oriko daughter of Semo. His home was in the vicinity of the AIM Mission at Ogada.

Orwa was born in 1906 in Nyahera sub-location in Kisumo Location, Kisumu District. He belonged to the Kateng' sub-clan of the Kanyuto clan. He was the last born child of his parents. His elder and only brother was called Abisaye Andere.

According to the available evidence, Orwa's parents were poor. His father owned only one cow during his lifetime. But Ogonda was a proud and strong man who tirelessly worked hard to care for his family. Since Orwa was born in a poor family and endured considerable hardships in his youth, this greatly shaped his attitude and character as he grew up into adulthood. As shall be seen later in this section, he developed great ambitions and the determination to break away from the grip of poverty.

Like any Luo family, Orwa's family was deeply religious. They strongly believed in the Luo traditional religion and regularly performed family religious rituals. The family also actively participated in the clan or communal religious ceremonies. After 1921, once Filemona Orwa had
became an adult (i.e. after going through the nak ceremony), he began to involve himself in most of the religious ceremonies of his family and the community. During some of these ceremonies, the clan elders, whose religious positions were now threatened by the presence of the Christian Missionaries at Ogada, often reminded the young people that their first duty was to appease their ancestors by offering them regular sacrifices, rather than to join the Christian Mission at Ogada whose main objective was to undermine the importance of the Luo traditional religion. As a result of this, Orwa's attitude to Christianity before 1923 was quite negative. However, this changed in 1923 when he gradually began to realize some of the limitations of the Luo traditional life. He noticed, for example, that it was too confining and was not geared to meeting some of the challenges of life during the colonial period and modern times.

Upto 1923, Orwa's primary responsibility at home was to look after his father's cow and help in the farm. He says that herding one cow was boring although he still did so because his father was harsh and he wanted to avoid a clash with him.10

Although Orwa's family lived near the Ogada Mission, they did not embrace Christianity. His father was in fact completely opposed to the Mission at Ogada. His wife, as a rule, also respected and shared his views about Christianity. Several reasons account for this hostility. First, Ogonda saw Christianity as a threat to the traditional way of life. He was particularly concerned about the Missionaries' attempts to entice the children to the mission school. He felt that missionary education would also erode the traditions of his community.
Part of Ogonda's dislike for the mission was also because he regarded Christianity as a disguised form of British imperialism. This is because the mission was dominated by the Karombo clan, one of the Location's largest clans from which the colonial administration appointed the chiefs and sub-chiefs to administer the rest of the Kisumo clans.\textsuperscript{12}

And finally, the reason for Ogonda's resentment was practical. In the case of his own family, he realized that the involvement of his children in a mission school would deprive him of labour needed for working his land for subsistence. This was particularly important in view of the fact that Ogonda had a small family and already he lacked enough labour to till his land. He also feared that missionary education would undermine parental authority, since there were already reported incidences of mission converts using to do any work on Sundays on the ground that it was contrary to the teachings of the Bible.\textsuperscript{13}

Because of the foregoing reasons he warned his children not to embrace Christianity and threatened to curse them in case they defied his wishes. Instead, he urged the children to remain true believers in Nyasaye and the allied Luo ancestral spirits. Until he died in 1927, Ogonda remained andent opponent of the Christian religion.

As a young man, Filemona Orwa was described by his contemporaries as very hardworking, determined and ambitious man." He was also "patient, polite, very kind, obedient, understanding and quite hospitable."\textsuperscript{14} This shyness constantly kept him aloof and his age groups could hardly comprehend what his likes and dislikes were. On the other hand, his
obedience earned him admiration amongst his family members and relatives. Members of his clan also grew fond of him because of his respect for the elders. But behind this mask of politeness, there was a strong-willed and ambitious personality. He was determined to break away from the limiting circumstances of his family life. These characteristics in part explain why Orwa went to school despite his father’s strong objections and negative views about the new mission.

Like many young people, Filemona Orwa was intrigued by some of the aspects of Christianity and was determined to enjoy some of the benefits of Christian religion like education. Contrary to his father’s wishes he decided to enrol at Ogada AIM school in 1923. At the beginning, he attended only the Sunday classes. After about three weeks, he became a full-time student.

Several other factors, however, combined to influence Orwa about his decision to join the Mission School. One of these was fascination. As a young man, Orwa was fascinated by and receptive to Christian ideas which were new in his community. He was particularly impressed by organised church worship and was also excited by the Christian songs in Luo language. According to Orwa himself, "the Christian songs attracted those of us who lived in the vicinity of the mission."

Apart from the fascination, Orwa was also persuaded to go to the Ogada Mission school by some of his young friends who had already enrolled at the school. These included Charles Kungu, William Wanga and Girsom Onedo.
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But the most decisive factor was Orwa's curiosity about the magic of writing and reading. To people of Orwa's generation, literacy offered a more promising future in colonial Kenya. The ability to read and write was regarded as a passport by young Africans to white-collar jobs in the colonial civil service or in the private sector. As H.P. Gale has observed, the Africans who went to the Mission Schools, "came only for secular education and expected to be paid for attending school."18

At school, the students were taught how to read and write, but most of the curriculum was taken by religious education. The new students had to learn to read the Bible first before they could be allowed to take baptism classes.19 The lessons were mainly organized and taught by Miss Boldt herself, although sometimes, the African teacher - evangelists like Johana Ouko and Zakaria Udhili also helped her.

Orwa's father's reaction to the school issue was strong opposition, if not outright objection. He regarded the decision as open disobedience and threatened to seek the help of Daniel Olilo, the area sub-chief to stop Orwa from attending school.20 Orwa on the other hand stood firm and consistently explained to his father and elder brother that he did not disrespect his father by joining school.21 For about three months, the relationship between father and son remained strained. However, by the end of April 1923, his father gave up the idea of seeing the sub-chief, and Orwa promised his friend, Charles Kungu that he would work hard, acquire some skill, get an employment and disprove his father's view that education was destructive.22 This was the beginning of Orwa's inherent rebellious attitude against authority.
Thus Orwa went to school with high hopes of attaining a meaningful education. According to his testimony, he worked very hard in the reading class, and was the best student throughout his stay at the school. This was confirmed by Charles Kungu who was Orwa's classmate and close childhood friend. His experience at the school did not, however, transform his religious convictions because the stay was too short and could not have had any lasting effect on his ideas.

In 1925, only two years after joining school, Orwa decided to leave the mission school, soon after acquiring some elementary writing skills. He decided to go and seek employment.

Orwa's own explanation of his short stay at the Ogada Mission School was that he found the education offered at school inadequate. He said that from the time he realized that Bible stories formed the basis of the school education, he decided that the Christian education was only good for those who were interested in becoming catechists and evangelists. And since he was not interested in either of the two, but had often wished to work as a clerk, he decided to leave school.23 Although it may be partly true that Filemona Orwa found the Mission education unsatisfactory, it may well have been the case that he had been persuaded by some friends and age-mates like Paul Petro Waore, who was already working as a migrant Labourer in Thika, to leave school and settle down as an adult.

In his own testimony, while he was still in school, he had been in contact with Petro Waore who had told him about the job opportunities at Thika. Waore had told him that compared to the neighbouring towns like
Kisumu and Kericho, the wages at Thika were much better. It was Waore in fact who gave him the money for his transport to Thika, on condition that he would refund him later. His father also gave him three shillings for the journey.

While at Thika, Filemona Orwa stayed with Waore for ten days before he could secure employment. During the ten days, he felt homesick a lot. He also met different people, especially from the Kikuyu communities who shocked him with information about being landless (their land had been alienated by the colonial administration). These experiences increased his dislike for the Europeans.

He started working at the Karamaini coffee farm in August 1925. Between 1925 and 1927, Orwa worked for three different farms. At the Karamaini farm, the conditions of service included a wage of five shillings per month. In addition to this, they were provided with posho which consisted of a tinful of maize flour and vegetables twice per week and an old one-roomed dormitory which was shared by eight employees. The labourers were expected to work for twelve hours each day. Although this was the average working day (in hours) at the time in most farms at Thika, the average wage here (which was eight shillings in other farms) was comparatively lower.

There were about eighteen labourers at the Karamaini farm. All of them including Orwa were not assigned any specific duties. The European Nyapara (foreman) supervising the labourers could assign any duty to any labourer of his choice. It so happened that Orwa was more often than not
instructed to go and clean the toilets, and the European houses at the farm. This work involved going to fetch water from River Chania (about five kilometers away) for cleaning purposes and also for domestic use by the Europeans. Fetching water was very difficult for Orwa and by the end of each day, he was left completely exhausted. Besides, fetching water was strictly a woman's job in Orwa's community. According to Orwa, it was partly because of this that he had refused to work as a houseboy at Kisumu and had opted to work as a migrant labourer at the Thika farm. On many occasions, he complained to another European foreman who supervised the houses, the toilets and the water tanks in vain. As a result of his hatred for the job and despite the fact that the workers at Karamaini were treated well by the Nyapara, Orwa could not bear it for long.

In November 1925, Orwa left and found employment at the Kakusi sisal farm, about three kilometers from Thika town. At this farm, the terms of service were relatively better. The labourers worked for only ten hours, the minimum salary was eight shillings per month and the posho was provided more regularly. Accommodation was, however, the biggest problem. The labourers' quarters were so few, hence most of them were shared by a minimum of nine to ten employees. Orwa also disliked the hot-tempered European foreman who was very hostile to African labourers.

Orwa found the attitude of the foreman unbearable and in April 1926, he left the Kakusi farm and joined the neighbouring Narendwa sisal farm where the conditions and the terms of service were much better. At the
beginning of 1927, his salary went up to sixteen shillings, although the amount of posho was reduced from three to two cups per day. This posho was not enough to support the labourers and often they had to buy sweet potatoes from the neighbouring villages so as to supplement what the farm provided.

These frequent changes of jobs by Filemona Orwa could be interpreted in three different ways. The first possibility is that it might show Orwa was dissatisfied with the conditions of employment in each farm. Secondly, it could also show that Filemona Orwa resented and rebelled against the domineering and condescending attitude of the European foremen who supervised work at Thika. Finally, the frequent changes may well show that Orwa was a restless and proud man who believed that his talents were far superior to those of an ordinary farm labourer. He probably felt that he had better talents which could offer him a much better employment.

Orwa's working experience in Thika exposed him to the racist and condescending attitudes of the Europeans. He began to realize that the Europeans were determined to exploit the African workers. Gradually, he became dissatisfied with the life of a manual labourer and the poor working conditions on the sisal and coffee farms. In terms of Christianity, Orwa's working experience did not change his religious views much since the labourers were not exposed to religious teachings and preachings at the farms.

By the end of 1926, Filemona Orwa was beginning to explore ways of escaping from the routine of manual labour. Fortunately enough he met at
the Narendwa farm a kind man called Manase. This man was one of the clerks of the farm and he became a friend and adviser to Orwa. It was Manase who advised Orwa to go for further training in order to improve his career prospects. The training at the Native Industrial Training Depot (N.I.T.D.) at Kabete was sponsored by the colonial administration, and it was responsible for training artisans and craftsmen. Students admitted to this institution automatically received government sponsorship. On 19th September, 1927, Filemona Orwa together with five of his colleagues, namely Ernest Okiwi, Walter Wanga, Erasto Onyango, Nathaniel Odiyo and Jonah Binge, went to the N.I.T.D. to seek admission. After being interviewed to test their reading skills by the European Director of the Institute, they were all admitted on 21st September, 1927. The NITD offered a variety of courses which included carpentry, masonry, leathercraft and tailoring. Orwa chose to take a five-year course in carpentry. This choice was influenced by the fact that trainees in this field were given tools on completion to enable them to start their own workshops after acquiring the necessary skills.

At the institute, the trainees were provided with free accommodation, food, a pair of uniforms after every six months, one waist coat every one year, an allowance of ten shillings every month, and a third class train return-ticket once every year to enable them to visit their rural homes.

At the N.I.T.D. Filemona Orwa observed that the African instructors who actually did the bulk of the work were treated as subordinate employees both by their European colleagues and the institute's administration. For instance, unlike their European counterparts, the African instructors lived
in the dormitories like the trainees and they always complained of their comparatively lower wages. These experiences combined to heighten Orwa's dislike for the Europeans and his hatred of racial discrimination. He became convinced that the African had no place and no future in the European dominated institutions including the Christian churches.

During his stay at Kabete, Orwa began to associate with some Christian groups led by Africans. He occasionally attended some of their services and it was during one of these services that he met Zakayo Kivuli who soon became Orwa's mentor and who, together with him, eventually played a leading role in the founding of the AICN.

In December 1929, Filemona Orwa became a Christian convert. When he went home for a holiday and found the CMS station established at Nyahera, he made a conclusive decision to become a CMS convert. The major factor which influenced him to join the CMS and not the AIM, which was the most influential missionary group in the area, was the fact that the CMS station was under the leadership of an African Catechist, Ibrahim Ahoya, who was also a member of his clan.

Having fully decided to embrace Christianity, Orwa accordingly started to attend baptismal classes at Nyahera, taught by Ibrahim Ahoya. When he returned to Kabete in January, 1930, he continued with the classes. On 6th February 1930, Orwa was baptised at Nairobi by Reverend G.W. Burns of the CMS. In August of the same year, he was confirmed as a full member of the CMS.
From 1930 to 1932, while he was still at the N.I.T.D., his religious attitudes drastically changed. He developed a positive view about Christianity and began to attend the Christian meetings, organised by the African converts at the school more regularly. In 1932, Orwa successfully completed his training at the N.I.T.D. In accordance with the terms of his training, he was provided with carpentry tools with which to start a workshop. In April 1932, before starting to work, Orwa got married to Naum Berita. Surprisingly, the marriage procedure took the traditional form.

In August of the same year, Orwa started working in the Kimingini Gold Mine Company at Sigalagala in Kakamega District. He worked here as a carpenter until June 1933 when the company closed down.

Between 1934 and 1936, Filemona Orwa was employed as a carpenter by the Pentecostal Mission at Nyang'ori. During this period, he once more met Kivuli and the two men became close friends. He also developed a keen interest in the activities of the Pentecostal Church at Nyang'ori and the CMS at Nyahera. His religious faith grew stronger and once again he began to regularly attend church services.

In 1937, Orwa decided to start his own carpentry workshop because it was better paying. Consequently, he left the mission's employment and started a carpentry shop at Mamboleo, a few kilometres from Kakamega town. Here, Orwa trained many people between 1937 and 1940. Some of his students like Josek Yogo Ojino, Albert Ojowa, Isack Odhiambo and Joel Abindi later became some of the best carpenters in the region.
It was between 1934 and 1940 that Filemona Orwa began to think seriously about the role of the protestant churches in Western Kenya as he became an ardent reader of the Bible. He was particularly attracted by the story of Pentecost as related in the Acts of the Apostles. He was also attracted to the ideas and practices of the Spirit Movement. Furthermore, he began to hold regular prayer meetings with Kivuli and also attended the prayer meetings organised by the latter at Givavei Hill near Nyang'ori in Kakamega District. In their discussions the two men began to study and interpret the Bible and to relate the teachings in the Bible to the situation in Western Kenya during the 1930s. They tried to find out whether the practice of Christianity in Western Kenya conformed to the teachings of the Bible.

As a result of these discussions Orwa in his own words, "became increasingly disenchanted with the CMS at Nyahera." He particularly resented the missionary contempt for the traditional African values. He felt that there was no justification for this in the Bible.

In October 1940, after holding discussions with and attending the prayer meetings organised by Kivuli, Orwa reportedly received the Holy Spirit. In his own testimony, Orwa recalled,

One night, after Givavei meeting, something suddenly woke me up, and I found myself kneeling down beside my bed praying... then came a picture before me, showing all the sins I had committed. A voice told...
me "I'm Jesus Christ talking to you before the Holy Spirit". From that day, I spoke in tongues and became very sick."

Apparently there was no cure for this sickness. None of the known traditional medicines proved effective. As a last resort Orwa's brother decided to turn to spiritual healing. Accordingly, Kivuli, who was already reputed healer in the area, was invited to pray for him. Filemona Orwa claimed that he sensed Kivuli's arrival at his home. As Kivuli approached the home, Orwa cried out, "Here comes the message from Israel!"

Soon afterwards, Orwa recovered. As a result the name of the Church was later derived from this exclamation. This alone is a good pointer to the centrality of Orwa in the emergence of the AICN.

Throughout October and November, 1940, Orwa became infatuated with religious enthusiasm. He claimed that he regularly saw visions and heard voices. According to him, the voices constantly reminded him that he was a inner, and that he should repent. He also became a fervent preacher and began to spread the message of redemption and repentance in his village and amongst his relatives.

In short, he became a religious fanatic. From this time he began to see himself as a prophet sent by God to redeem his society which he now regarded as full of decadence. He also felt that the Anglican church in
Western Kenya was an imperial institution whose main objective was to promote racism rather than to promote salvation amongst the Africans.

During the last quarter of 1940, Filemona Orwa began to openly criticise the CMS at Nyahera and the Anglican church in the region as a whole. He particularly criticised the CMS Missionary attitude towards the African church leadership. He noted that although the growth of the Anglican Church in the region depended very much on the evangelization by the African Catechists and clergy, the missionaries often regarded the work of the latter as subordinate and unimportant. Consequently, the majority of the African clergy occupied a lower level in church leadership as compared to their missionary counterparts. In most cases, the African priests worked without salary for many months because their work was considered to be voluntary.  

Orwa also criticised the CMS because of the fact that unlike their A.I.M. and PAOG counterparts, there were no prospects of the Africans' advancement within the Anglican church. The missionaries were not only reluctant to train the Africans, but the Africans with the same qualifications as a missionary and doing the same work, were paid less and given less responsibility than their missionary counterparts. As E.A. Nzioki observes,

This inconsistent internal organization led to a lot of conflicts in the church some of which resulted in rebellion from or complete division within the church.
Lastly, Orwa attacked the CMS Missionaries for failing to practise what they taught. He said, for example, that while the missionaries preached about love, they often practised quite the opposite. He thus called upon them to seek salvation through repentence and confession of sin. He urged them to pray for baptism in the Holy Spirit.\(^48\)

Orwa's activities within and without the church provoked considerable concern in the ranks of the CMS leadership. The CMS leadership at Nyahera accused him of being a disruptive element within the church. He was also accused of being divisive, and spreading ideas contrary to the CMS doctrine. Orwa was actually regarded as heretical and was advised to stop his ideas or else he would be expelled from the CMS. Orwa refused to do so. Consequently the CMS leadership called a meeting at Nyahera in December 1940 to consider the ways of defusing the "Orwa problem". Those who attended included Michael Gregory, a white missionary from Maseno, Ibrahim Ahoya, Joel Odero, Charles Kungu, Josphina Owuondo and Daniel Olilo. Filemona Orwa, too, was invited to attend the meeting.\(^49\) Orwa was warned at the meeting that his activities for the past two months, especially those involving public confession, had been highly detrimental to the integrity not only of the local church at Nyahera but of the entire CMS Mission in Western Kenya. He was also told that his obsession with the importance of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues were inconsistent with the established doctrine of the Church Missionary Society. Accordingly, he was directed to apologise to the CMS leadership and the general membership of the CMS. He was also asked to desist from behaving in a manner detrimental to the CMS as a whole.\(^50\)
Filemona Orwa listened to the above remonstrances but, in his response, he refused to apologise or even recant his ideas. He insisted that he was simply following God's instructions. According to Charles Kungu and Josphine Owuondo, all those present were taken aback by Orwa's obstinate attitude. Since neither the CMS leadership nor Filemona Orwa was willing to compromise the meeting ended in a deadlock. As a result, the CMS leadership decided to expel him from the church. In the letter of expulsion, Hesbon Tom Nyonga, on behalf of the Maseno Mission's Secretary, wrote:

As you said. Orwa has proved his unwillingness to co-operate. We are not going to tolerate him any more while he continues to contaminate the church at Nyahera. He should be immediately told never to attend our services either in Nyahera or anywhere else.  

When Odero informed Orwa about the expulsion, the latter did not look surprised. On the contrary, he was already thinking of breaking away and forming his own church. After the expulsion, he started holding prayer meetings at his home and persuaded certain people to follow him. Gradually, Orwa not only spread his message at Nyahera but also extended his activities in Kisumu Location as a whole. He also began to win over prominent church leaders of the local Anglican Church including Josphina Owuondo and Girson Onleo. Even Pastor Joel Tito Odero, who had participated in Orwa's expulsion was won over to the new Movement. The Orwa group became known as Jo-Roho, meaning the people of the spirit. By April 1941, this group consisted of ninety eight members, most of whom were from Nyahera.
All religious groups operating in Kenya, local or otherwise, were expected to register with the colonial authorities. For that reason, Filemona Orwa was advised by his friend Zakayo Kivuli and Ezekiel Kasuku (who later became the president of the Appeal Court) to seek the permission and the recognition of the colonial authorities. Accordingly, he reported to the then chief of Kisumu Location, Yona Orao about the existence of his religious group and requested the government to recognize it as a legitimate religious organization. The chief advised Orwa to report the issue to the District Commissioner.

In May 1941, Orwa went to the District Commissioner’s office to report the issue. The D.C. told him that his request would be considered. The District Commissioner took one month to respond. On 3rd June 1941, the D.C’s office instructed Chief Yona Orao to investigate Orwa’s group in order to establish whether it was purely a religious society. The D.C. promised to allocate some land to Orwa’s organization if the Chief was satisfied with its religious credentials. Chief Orao was satisfied that Orwa’s group was a legitimate religious organization. He laid the foundation of the church at Obede Nyahera on 11th July 1941. The construction of the church began soon afterwards and was completed and opened on 20th September 1941. The opening ceremony was attended by Orwa’s followers, Daniel Olilo, the sub-chief for the Location, and Zakayo Kivuli who was still a member of the Pentecostal Church.

During the opening ceremony, Filemona Orwa outlined some of the fundamental beliefs and practices of his group. First of all, they believed in Baptism in the Holy Spirit, without which salvation could not
be achieved. Secondly, all members were required to wear white robes as a symbol of purity and faithfulness. Members were also required to abstain from alcohol. Furthermore, he stressed the use of drums as legitimate instruments of worship.57

The opening of the church at Nyahera in 1941 was important because it gave an institutional form to the Jo-Roho group. It marked the formal beginning of what became known as the AICN. Orwa's activities were important in the founding of the AICN because until he came to the scene, the Spirit Movement simply existed within the people. Orwa provided the leadership without which the AICN could not have taken off. Although Orwa was important in the founding of the AICN, the church would not have taken off without the co-operation and religious leadership of Kivuli. It is therefore necessary to discuss the career of Kivuli before the rise of the AICN.

3.3 David Zakayo Kivuli

Zakayo Kivuli was born in a monogamous family in 1896, at Cimarakwa in Nyang'ori Location, Kakamega District. His father was called Menywa and his mother was known as Rubai Kadili. He was the last born child of his parents.58 His other brothers included Zakaria Oyiengo, Enzugusi and Mathias Muzibwanyi. Two of his sisters who later became his religious associates were Rosa Buzibiri and Sabeti Mboga. His home at Cimarakwa was about eight kilometres from the Pentecostal Mission at Nyang'ori.
Kivuli belonged to the Bagenya clan. This clan, although wholly integrated into Luhyia society was said to be Nilotic in origin. It was part of the Siaya's Umira Kager clan which migrated and settled in Kakamega District in the third quarter of the 18th century.\(^59\)

Although Kivuli's parents were very poor, they worked hard on their small piece of land for subsistence. Apart from farming, Menywa also made hoes which he sold at Gimarakwa village and at the markets in Tiriki and Maragoli.\(^60\)

Kivuli was the favourite child of his parents. He often accompanied his father on his various errands. Zakayo Kivuli grew up as an adventurous, determined, and ambitious young man. Physically, he was also very strong. He could beat up and even bully not only his age-mates but also older boys during mock fights.\(^61\) Thus as a child, Kivuli already had some leadership qualities and potential.

Although Kivuli's parents were devout worshippers of Nyasaye and regularly participated in traditional religious ceremonies, such as sacrifices, both at the family and clan levels, they did not object to their children joining the Mission School at Nyang'ori. On the contrary, they persuaded their children to go to school.\(^62\)

It is not clear why Menywa was so keen in persuading his children to go to school. But this can be explained in two ways. First of all, it appears that Menywa was impressed by the fact that the missionaries at Nyang'ori seemed so concerned about the converts because they occasionally
provided them with free medical services, foodstuffs (tinned beef and bread) and even clothes. It is also possible that Menywa had foreseen the benefits of European education even before the First World War.

In 1918, Kivuli decided to join the Pentecostal School at Nyang' ori. Several factors seemed to have influenced this decision. The first of these was his father's wishes and persistent encouragement. Secondly, some of Kivuli's friends like Zedekia Musungu and Elisha Misigo both of whom were already at the school also persistently encouraged him to join. Thirdly, Zakayo Kivuli joined the Mission School to avoid conscription into the colonial army during the First World War.63

Kivuli stayed in school until 1921. The school curriculum consisted of courses such as reading, writing, music, handicrafts and catechism.64 He did very well in most of the courses offered.65 Kivuli's experience as a student played an important role in the foundation of his religious faith. The teachers, his friends and other students often encouraged new students including Kivuli to take reading and religious education more seriously. Kivuli therefore undertook catechism seriously because he thought, at least initially, that performing well in this course would enable him to acquire some employment in the Colonial Civil Service.68

People like Kivuli went to school with specific expectations in mind, that is, to acquire the type of education that would lead them straight away to white-collar employment.69 Unfortunately, the type of education at Nyang'ori did not live up to their expectations. By 1921, Kivuli was already dissatisfied and he decided to leave the school. The reason why
Kivuli left school after only three years is not certain. However, according to Ainea Oponyo, one of the Mission students who left school in the same year, the African students were leaving school because they were dissatisfied with the form and content of missionary education. For them it lacked excitement and failed to meet the challenges of the new era. As a result, Kivuli, like many of the mission students, lost the initial interest in education and preferred to work as a labourer.

This reason, however, seems to be more professed than genuine. It appears from the available evidence that, by 1921, Kivuli believed that education was leading him nowhere. He joined school when he was already too old (twenty-two years). It is possible that after three years of schooling he felt that he could not stay in school much longer because, as an adult, he needed to find employment and start his own family. This was reinforced by the fact that with the death of his parents in 1921, family responsibility fell on him since his brother, Mathias Muzibwanyi was, by then, suffering from a mental ailment.

Between 1922 and 1924, Kivuli worked in three different farms in Kitale. First, until the end of 1923, he worked as a shamba boy at the Serlit Settler Farm. His initial salary was three shillings per month, but this was soon raised to five shillings. In addition, he was given posho consisting of a cup of maize flour and beans three times a week. Small dormitories were also provided for the labourers. At the end of 1923, Kivuli left and got employed at a second farm known as the Berk Farm. Apparently he left Serlit Farm because he felt the wages were too low, and also because posho was not regularly provided.
The conditions of work at the Berk was comparatively better than in the previous farm. The starting salary was seven shillings per month. Posho, mainly consisting of maize flour and vegetables, at least a tinful four times a week, was regularly provided. Furthermore, there was no accommodation problem on this farm. The problem, however, was the European foreman who treated the labourers with contempt, despised them, and was often rude to them. Besides, workers were expected to work on a daily basis, whether they were well or not. The foreman never listened to workers' complaints or grievances. By the end of 1924, Kivuli was already unhappy with his work. Fortunately, at this very moment, Otto Keller invited him to go and work for the Pentecostal Mission as a gardener.

Kivuli chose to work for the Mission for two main reasons. The first was the favourable working conditions; his salary was seven shillings per month. His posho consisted of maize flour, vegetables, milk, fruits and occasionally meat. Accommodation was better since he shared a house with only three of his co-workers. The second reason was that working for the Mission would bring him closer to the school which he now felt, he had regrettably left prematurely.

Kivuli was a committed worker. This was appreciated by Keller who within a short time promoted him to the position of foreman of all Pentecostal farms in Nyang'ori. His wages were increased to eight shillings per month.
During his employment period at the Nyang'ori Mission, Kivuli came into close contact with the Christians at the Mission. Many of his long-time friends such as Zedekia Musungu, Zedekia Muhanda and Charles Videngede were now senior students and part-time catechists at the School. Together with Keller, they persuaded Kivuli to go back to school. As a result, Kivuli decided to rejoin the Mission School in 1925.77

During this second period of his schooling, Kivuli concentrated on handicrafts and Bible studies (catechism). His intention was to be baptised and to acquire some skills. At the end of 1925, Kivuli was baptised and he was appointed as a full time catechist. By the end of 1926, Kivuli had been appointed the overall head of all African Catechists at Nyang'ori.78

Kivuli's experience as one of the Mission's Catechists played an important role in preparing him for the future. It exposed him to wide reading and interpretation of the Bible. Gradually, his religious faith grew stronger. Furthermore, as a result of his closer association with the European Missionaries at Nyang'ori, he became convinced that Christianity was superior to the traditional African way of life. Therefore he worked hard to develop his religious faith with all the enthusiasm of a new convert.79 He also became a volunteer evangelist and began to spread the gospel in and around Nyang'ori.

Kivuli was ambitious, and never contented with what he had achieved. In 1927, he persuaded Keller to grant him funds which would enable him to join the Jeans School at Kabete for further studies. He joined the school
in April 1927 to train as a supervisor of schools. He was taught farming and the basic principles of administration. During his time at Kabete, he organized and conducted prayer meetings every Sunday at the school.

These meetings were regularly attended by many African converts from the Jeans School and also from the neighbouring Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD). He was a persuasive and reliable preacher who won over many followers including Filemona Orwa. These converts looked up to him with admiration and saw him as a potential spiritual leader.

In 1929, upon his completion of his studies at Kabete, he was appointed the supervisor of the Pentecostal Schools in Nyang'ori and Maragoli. For the next two and a half years, Kivuli was primarily concerned with the organization and the administration of the Pentecostal Schools. His religious work became much more limited. In fact during this period he lost interest in religious matters to some extent.

In 1931, two instructors from the Jeans School inspected Kivuli's work at Nyang'ori. They were impressed with his performance and they invited him to return to Kabete for further training. At first Keller opposed this invitation because they did not have enough funds, and also because he felt that Kivuli had acquired enough skills to run the schools. Kivuli responded by immediately threatening to leave the Mission's employment. Puzzled by Keller's attitude, he asked;
What is the matter,
The visitors praised
my work and have invited
me for a course. Why
do you refuse to let me
go? I thought that you
Europeans had come to
help the Africans.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Keller later managed to persuade her husband to let Kivuli go.

All the same from then onwards Kivuli began to doubt the sincerity of
the missionaries in their declared goal of promoting African advancement.
For the first time, Kivuli began to see Keller as an obstacle to his
educational development. He felt that Keller was envious of his success as
a supervisor of schools.

Throughout 1931, when Kivuli was at the Jeans School, he developed a
deep interest in the study of the Bible. His main aim was to find out
whether the Missionary attitudes and practices were consistent with the
teachings of the Bible. He realized that the missionaries were selective
in the use and interpretation of the Bible. For example, he realized that
while the Bible taught about love for one another the missionaries disliked
the Africans ostensibly for their unchristian practices.

Secondly, Kivuli realized that while the Bible was quiet about the
issue of one man, one wife, the Pentecostal Missionaries were refusing to
accept polygamous couples in the church, let alone baptising their
children. Lastly, he criticised the fact that while the doctrine of the
Pentecostal church (which was based on the Book of Acts of the Apostles) emphasized Baptism in the Holy Spirit, beliefs in visions, dreams and prophecy, the church in Nyang'ori had quietly adopted a hostile stance against some of the African converts who had claimed powers to communicate with God through dreams and visions.

Thus Kivuli reached the conclusion that while the missionaries outwardly professed the idea of equality and the universal brotherhood of man, they practised racial discrimination and paternalism. They tended to have a condescending attitude towards the African converts. He concluded that the Pentecostal Church in Western Kenya was dead and needed spiritual renewal.

In his sermons throughout 1931, Kivuli began to attack racial discrimination in the churches and called upon the Africans to unite against the paternalistic tendencies of the European missionaries.

On the 12th February 1932, Kivuli visited the PAOC Gibogi Church where some of his close friends Yosin Auguza, Elisha Misigo, Charles Videngede and Misienywa were already members of the Spirit Movement. Having witnessed the confession sessions Kivuli declared to have received the Holy Spirit. In his own testimony, Kivuli stated:

On 12th February 1932, as I was singing in my house something lifted me up and threw me to the ground. Everything became dark, and I was temporarily blind. That night I began to speak in tongues like the apostles
of the New Testament. The whole house was filled with light. For the next seventeen days I was blind, and I heard a voice like that of Thunder. For the next twelve days I could eat nothing; and during this period God commanded me not to shave my beard and to take the name of Paul and become a preacher. Then I stayed in my house praying night and day.88

Soon after his vision, Kivuli resigned from his post of supervisor of schools in order to concentrate on spreading the message of the Holy Spirit. He organized prayer meetings and confession sessions in many parts of Nyang'ori: He also began to claim supernatural powers which included the performance of miracles, healing the sick and receiving direct communication from God. 89

By virtue of the fact that he was a good orator and powerful preacher, Kivuli gradually attracted many followers and even the support of the Kellers. Most of his followers consisted of a large section of the Pentecostal Congregation, with whom he had regularly organized revival meetings every Thursday evening, and twice every month at the Givavei Hill.90

Kivuli's revivalist meetings were initially supported by the Pentecostal Mission in the belief that such meetings would facilitate the process of Pentecostal evangelization. The Kellers in particular were enthusiastic about Kivuli's revivalist activities. His growing influence
was recognized in 1936 when he was appointed the Chairman of the African Church Committee and recognized as a full-time local evangelist.91

Kivuli's growing influence was not only recognized by the Pentecostal Mission but also by the colonial authorities. In 1937, he was appointed as a member of the Local Native Council (L.N.C.), a position of considerable public responsibility which he held until 1943.92

But Kivuli's growing popularity and considerable power aroused some disquiet in the African church leadership, which succeeded, temporarily, in turning a considerable amount of African opinion against him. This is because they were jealous of the fact that at this stage Kivuli appeared to be a favourite of the European Missionaries. Furthermore, Kivuli also, due to his power, became a little arrogant and adopted a domineering attitude towards African leaders.93

Despite the opposition, Kivuli's influence continued to grow in the 1930s. He gathered around him a group of personal followers mainly from the Spirit Movement within the Pentecostal Church and by 1941, he was already a major religious and political force at Nyang'ori.

During the 1930s and early 1940s Kivuli retained close contacts with Filemona Orwa. He closely followed the latter's efforts to establish an African Independent Church at Nyahera. Nevertheless, until 1942, Kivuli had not thought of leaving the Pentecostal Mission to establish an African Independent Church of his own. One of the explanations for this was that, compared to the case of Orwa and the CMS, the Pentecostal church was more
willing to accommodate Kivuli's "revivalism". Furthermore, unlike in the CMS, there was greater African participation in the Pentecostal Mission. Some Africans like Kivuli were appointed to prominent positions in the church.

However, in 1942 the relationship between Kivuli and the Pentecostal Mission began to deteriorate and Kivuli with some of his followers was forced to secede from the Pentecostal Church. Soon afterwards, his group joined Orwa's to form the African Israel Church Nineveh.94

One important reason accounted for the worsening relationship between Kivuli and the Pentecostal Mission. This was that, by the end of 1941, the African opponents of Kivuli had succeeded in convincing Keller that Kivuli's revivalism was a threat to the interests of the Pentecostal Church. Keller began to suspect Kivuli's real intentions. For this reason he blocked Kivuli's appointment as an Assistant Missionary in August 1941 despite the fact that Kivuli had received the majority votes.

Thus in 1942 Kivuli decided to break away for the following immediate reasons. First, he was annoyed that his election as an assistant missionary had been deliberately blocked by Keller. Secondly, secession appeared to be the only way to avoid incessant quarrels with Keller. Thirdly, Kivuli was fed up with the endless bickerings within the African leadership. Fourthly, Kivuli's strong and ambitious personality also contributed to his decision to secede. It is possible that having realized his spiritual potential and the large following which he had by then attracted, he developed the ambition and the desire to get away from
the limiting circumstances which operating within the Pantecostal Mission entailed. Hence, he wanted to establish a religious organization that would be under his full control.

Lastly, Kivuli's decision to split from the Pentecostal Mission was also influenced by Orwa's formation of the Jo-Roho Movement at Nyahera. Since Kivuli's long-time closest friend had dissented from the CMS and had founded an African independent religious movement and since the colonial authorities had recognised this religious movement, Kivuli felt he too could move along the same line.

Nevertheless, having seceded, Kivuli, like Orwa, sought recognition from the colonial authorities. But before he could do that, he first went to O.C. Keller and told him about his intentions. It is reported that Keller did not express any objections because Kivuli's plans were consistent with the independent traditions of the Pentecostal Churches. In fact Keller supported Kivuli's decision to establish a separate church and gave two exercise books to use as registers and two envelopes for correspondence purposes.\textsuperscript{95}

Kivuli also went and informed his friend Orwa about his intentions to break away from the Pentecostal Mission. The latter gave him full support and encouragement.

On 23rd April 1942, Kivuli informed the government, through Guselwa, the President of the Local Native Council, about the existence of the new group. In his letter of notification, Kivuli stated that he was the leader
of the revival group which had seceded from the PAOC, and that he was requesting the government for its recognition and protection. He also pledged on behalf of his group to remain obedient and to comply with all government laws and regulations regarding religious movements. In trying to outline some of the major beliefs and objectives of the new group, Kivuli underlined the importance of the Holy Spirit, and further stated that one of the major objectives of this group was to bring together in fellowship all converts who had experienced Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

On the 26th May Kivuli also reported to Mr. Williams, the District Commissioner of Kakamega District. After some consultation with the L.N.C., the D.C. sent Chief Amiani of Nyang'ori Location to announce publicly at a baraza (gathering) that Kivuli's request had been granted.

Before Kivuli left the Pentecostal Mission, his followers were estimated to be one hundred and fifty people. But when he decided to secede, he only managed to persuade about forty to join him. Most of his large following had opted to remain in the Pentecostal Church when they realized that Kivuli had broken away from the Pentecostal Mission.

3.4 The Merger of the Orwa and Kivuli Groups

In September 1942, Filemona Orwa and Zakayo Kivuli met to discuss the possibility of merging their religious groups into a single unified Movement. The proposal to merge the two groups was first made by Zakayo Kivuli when he approached Filemona Orwa about the issue on 19th September 1942. After consulting some of their prominent followers, the two men
decided that they should unite their groups into one single Movement for several reasons. Firstly, they realized that they shared a common objective which was to promote spiritual renewal in the region, yet they were functioning quite separate from each other. They thus saw the need to come together and pursue their religious objective in unison.

Apart from the above common objective, the two groups also shared a common doctrine which was based on Baptism in the Holy Spirit, belief in visions, dreams and prophecy.

Furthermore, the group leaders also decided to merge because their individual groups were relatively small, and since the two were long-term spiritual friends and religious companions, it was, in their view, necessary to join and work together to promote spiritual revival in Western Kenya.

During the meeting which was attended by the two group leaders only, their discussions covered a wide range of issues. Firstly, the group leaders were concerned about the universality of their approach.

Secondly, they discussed the general question of the future development of the church. It dawned on them that strength lay in unity and since their church was at its infancy, they could only accomplish what lay before them through a unified front. There were, for example, physical structures like churches to be built which required considerable amount of money. Besides, there were mammoth organizational undertakings within the church to be accomplished.
Thirdly, there was the issue of leadership. Whereas Orwa and Kivuli were overall leaders of their respective groups, they had to decide on which of the two of them had the overall responsibility of heading the amalgamated movement.¹⁰²

After prolonged consultations, the two arrived at a gentleman's agreement. This was as follows:

(a) Kivuli was given the overall leadership of the church, with Orwa as his deputy.
(b) Church leaders were to be appointed by Kivuli after some consultations with Orwa.
(c) The church would initially have two centres, Nyahera, headed by Orwa, and Jeprok (later called Nineveh), headed by Kivuli.
(d) Orwa would spread the message of the Holy Spirit amongst the Luo while Kivuli would do the same amongst the Luhyia.
(e) The first cathedral would be constructed at Jeprok and both the Luo and the Luhyia were to start collecting funds for that purpose.¹⁰³

Following the merger, during which Kivuli's forty-four followers were subsumed by the numerical superiority of Orwa's group, a need was felt that they identify themselves with a more definite name. After some consultation, the name Huru Salvation Church was adopted.¹⁰⁴ But this name was not acceptable to the then colonial government, which requested them to change it. It was in response to the requirement from the government that
Orwa and Kivuli settled down on the name of African Israel Church Nineveh.  

Soon after his assumption of the leadership, Kivuli embarked upon reorganizing and shaping the entire leadership of the AICN so that by the mid 1940s Orwa could be described as a mere assistant pastor in Nyahera sub-location and not as the initial leader of a larger group that merged to become the AICN. Leaders came to be appointed by Kivuli without necessarily making any consultations with Orwa. This was clearly a breach of the above mentioned agreement. 

It is important to note that in the light of the merger, one would have expected the ambitious, ardent and zealous Orwa whose group was bigger than Kivuli's to vie for leadership of the amalgamated group. Instead, Orwa became surprisingly contented with a subordinate role in the larger entity. His strange acquiescence could mainly be explained in terms of the unexplained veneration with which Kivuli was held; a man who had assumed the essence of not only a prophet but also a deity of some sort; and also Orwa's general admiration of John the Baptist and the role he played in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. 

Kivuli was a man whose mystical powers soon won the awe and admiration of all others including his peers and contemporaries such as Filemona Orwa. Having been with Kivuli at Kabete in the 1920s upto early 1930s, and later on in the late 1930s at Nyang'ori, it is evident that Orwa, like many others, undoubtedly became mesmerized by this extraordinarily powerful preacher who was reputed to be a great performer of miracles. It was
natural that Orwa felt that Kivuli was in a much better position to offer spiritual leadership to the AICN. This reverence for Kivuli was widespread throughout the church, and it was only after the death of Kivuli that Orwa, who by his seniority was next in line sought to take over the leadership of the church. But that was not to be the case.
The church services were accompanied by the use of drums, bells and dancing. Interview with Magdalina Shigholi, on 13th November 1986 at Kiboswa; interview with Florida Agumba on 17th November 1986 at Kiboswa; and interview with Timothy Rimba on 21st January 1987 at Nyang'ori.


8. Interview with Filemona Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Esao Owino on 14th October 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Yunia Wandeje on 27th October 1986, at Karatina, interview with
Patrick Olal on 2nd April 1987 at Nairobi; and interview with Josphina Owuondo on 13th October 1986 at Nyahera.

Ibid., F. Orwa was born in June, 1906, two days after the establishment of the AIM at Ogada.

Interview with Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera.

Ibid., Interview with Mariko Nyawara on 14th August 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Zakayo Otuoma on 19th September at Nyahera; interview with Zablon Riaro on 19th September at Kachama.


Interview with Nathaniel Odiyo on 19th November 1986 at Korowe; interview with Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with Josphina Owuondo on 14th October 1986 at Nyahera.

Interview with Otieno-Jowi on 3rd July 1986 at Nairobi; interview with Zablon Adero on 3rd September 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with Charles Kungu on 7th November 1986 at Ramba; interview with Ainea Rajwai on 14th September 1986 at Ramba.

Interview with Charles Kungu on 7th November 1986 at Ramba;

Interview with Charles Kungu on 7th November 1986 at Ramba; interview with Ibrahim Ongiri on 8th November 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with F. Orwa on 26th November 1986 at Ramba; and interview with Zablon Adero on 4th September 1986 at Karaten'g.

Interview with F. Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera.


20. Interview with Ibrahim Ongiri on 4th October 1986 at Karaten’g; Interview with F. Orwa 26th November 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with Charles Kungu on 4th September at Ramba.

21. Interview with Charles Kungu on 4th September at Ramba.


23. Interview with F. Orwa 26th November 1986 at Nyahera.

24. Interview with Paul Petro Waore on 3rd December 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with F. Orwa 17th November 1986 at Nyahera.


27. *Ibid.*, Interview with Ibrahim Ongiri on 8th November 1986 at Karaten’g; and interview with Zablon Adero on 4th September 1986 at Karaten’g.

28. There were seven houses and eleven toilets in all.

29. Interview with Filemona Orwa on 17th November 1986 at Nyahera.


31. Interview with F. Orwa on 14th October 1986 at Ramba; and interview with Ibrahim Ongiri and Hezron Nyagudo on 10th September 1986 at Karaten’g.

32. A tin of maize flour was provided three every week.
Interviews with Filemona Orwa on 14th October 1986 at Ramba; and on 17th November 1986 at Nyahera.

Orwa ibid., Interview with Japheth Yahuma on 14th October 1986 at Ramba; and interview with Hezron Nyagudo on 15th August 1987 at Karaten'g.

Interview with Filemona Orwa on 14th October 1986 at Ramba; and on 17th November 1986 at Nyahera.

Ibid.

Quoted from the agreement document between Orwa and the Director of Education, Kenya Colony. The agreement was signed by F. Orwa on 21st September 1927.

Interview with Filemona Orwa on 14th October 1986 at Ramba.

Quoted from his baptism certificate dated 6-2-1930.

Quoted from his confirmation certificate date 2-8-1930.

Interview with Filemona Orwa on 14th October 1986 at Ramba and interview with Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera.

Whenever Orwa was at Nyan'gori, he attended pentecostal services and only attended the CMS services when he visited home (Nyahera).

Interview with Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with H. Nyagudo on 15th August 1987 at Karaten'g; and interview with Zablon Adero on 6th February 1987 at Karaten'g.

Givavei was a small hill near Kivuli's home. On the hill stood a huge rock. Kivuli conducted regular prayer meetings here and it is said that during those prayers, water came from the rock. Givavei gradually turned into a Holy Hill.


47. Interview with Penina Odero on 15th December 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Berita Naum on 22nd September 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with Paul Petro Waore on 20th September 1986 at Nyahera.


49. Interview with Penina Odero on 15th December 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Berita Naum on 22nd September 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Paul Petro Waore on 20th September 1986 at Nyahera; and Joshua Mumbei on 20th September 1986 at Nyahera.

50. Interview with A.M Ajuoga on 27th April 1987 at Kisumu; interview with Filemona Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with Josphina Owuondo on 15th August 1986 at Nyahera.


52. Nyon'g to Odero, 16th December 1940. This letter is in the custody of Mrs. Penina Odero of Nyahera. Mrs. Odero is the widow of Joel Tito Odero who was then pastor of the CMS Nyahera.

53. interview with Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Josphina Owuondo on 15th August 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with Penina Odero on 21st December 1986 at Ramba; Berita Naum, *op. cit*.

54. Quoted from the register of the AICN dated 12-8-1946.
55. Interview with Orwa on 22\textsuperscript{nd} April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Paul Petro Waore on 13\textsuperscript{th} February 1987 at Nyahera; and interview with Joshua Mumbei on 3\textsuperscript{rd} November 1986 at Nyahera.


7. \textit{Ibid.}

8. Interview with Ainea Babu on 23\textsuperscript{rd} March 1987 at Gambogi; interview with Joel Andany on 22\textsuperscript{nd} February 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Rebeka Jumba Kivuli on 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1987 at "Nineveh."


1. Interview with Athanasio Adembesa on 19\textsuperscript{th} February 1987 at Gambogi; interview with Robert Adembesa on 30\textsuperscript{th} March 1987 at Gambogi; and interview with Ainea Babu on 23\textsuperscript{rd} March 1987 at Gambogi.

2. Kivuli's parents did not become Christians mainly because already they were too old and could not walk to Nyag'ori every Sunday to attend church services.

3. In Kivuli's own account, the school was used as an escape to save him from the hardships of war.

4. See the AICN article on the life history of Kivuli dated 10\textsuperscript{th} November 1975, in AICN Archives, Nineveh.

5. \textit{Ibid.}
68. Interview with Ainea Oponyo on 14th February 1987 at Kapsimot; interview with Ezekiel Kadenyi on 17th February 1987 at Kapsimot; interview with Hennington Luvaga on 16th March 1987 at Kapsengere; and interview with Benjamin Asige on 12th March, 1987 at Kapsengere.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. Interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd February 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Ainea Babu on 23rd March 1987 at Gambogi; and interview with Benjamin Asige on 12th March, 1987 at Kapsengere.

72. Ibid.

73. Interview with Ainea Oponyo on 14th February 1987 at Kapsimot; interview with Erick Lumwaji on 17th February at Banja; and interview with Sospeter Ludeki on 22-3-1987 at Kakamega.

74. Ibid.

75. It is said that he told Keller that he would like to stay at the mission’s premises so that he could ask some of the students to teach him in the evenings.

76. Interview with Ainea Oponyo on 14th February 1987 at Kapsimot; interview with Erick Lumwaji on 17th February at Banja; and interview with Sospeter Ludeki on 22-3-1987 at Kakamega.

77. Ibid., interview with Ainea Babu on 23rd March 1987 at Gambogi.

78. Interview with Ainea Babu on 23rd March 1987 at Gambogi; interview with Josaphat Onditi on 14th April 1987 at Kiboswa; and interview with Reverend Lynn on 27th July 1986 at Nairobi.

79. See B.A. Ogut and Welburn, op.cit., p. 76.
80. Interview with Josphat Onditi on 14th April 1987 at Kiboswa; and interview with Laban Adero on 3rd September 1986 at Karaten'g.

81. Interview with Josphat Onditi on 14th April 1987 at Kiboswa; and interview with Laban Adero on 3rd September 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with Joram Asige on 8th Feb 1987 at Hamisi; and interview with Filemona Orwa on 12th October 1986 at Nyahera.

82. Ibid.

83. B.A. Ogot and Welburn, op. cit., p. 76.

84. Ibid., p. 76.

85. Quoted from Ogot and Welbourn, op. cit., p. 76.

86. Keller had threatened to excommunicate Helen Arugutsa and Reuben Asara after the two had claimed that they regularly received messages from God through dreams and visions.

87 Interview with Helen Arugusta on 19th May 1986 at Jebrok; interview with Josphine Ilamuke on 23rd May 1986 at Jebrok; and interview with Timothy Asena on 13th May 1986 at Jeprok.

88. Interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd February 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Ainea Babu on 23rd March 1987 at Gambogi; interview with Jotham Chanzu on 27th April 1987 at Hamisi; and interview with Rebeka Jumba Kivuli on 17th April 1987 at "Nineveh".

89. Quoted from Ogot and Welbourn, op. cit., p. 77.

90. Ibid., pp. 77-79.
90. It is generally claimed that on many occasions during the Givavei meetings, Kivuli commanded water to come out of the dry stones. Certain prominent members of the group, including Kivuli, drank the water which was later referred to as Pihawi (Holy water) by Luo members of the AICN.

91. Interview with Harun Mudegu on 29th April 1987 at "Nineveh"; interview with Rev. Lywn on July 1986 at Nairobi, and interview with Rebeka Jumba on 22nd April 1987 at Nineveh.

92. Ogot and Welbourn, op.cit., p.81.

93. Interview with Reverand Lywn on 15th July 1986 at Nairobi; interview with Denis Chabuga on 30th March 1987 at Mbale; and interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd Feb. 1987 at Kaimosi.

94. Most of Kivuli's supporters had been won by Zakaria Oyiengo against Kivuli. Others opted to remain in the Pentecostal Mission when Kivuli decided to break away.

95 Keller's letter, giving Kivuli the assurance of their continuation in Christian fellowship is in the custody of Kivuli's widow, Rebeka Jumba. The letter is not dated.

96. See Ogot and Welbourn, op.cit., p.82.

97. Interview with Ainea Babu on 23rd March 1987 at Gambogi; interview with Rebeka Jumba on 22nd April 1987 at Nineveh; and interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd Feb. 1987 at Kaimosi.

98. Ibid.

99. See P.A.G Archives Nyang'ori.
Interview with Filemena Orwa on 14th October 1986 Ramba, interview with Charles Kungu on 14th October 1986 Ramba, interview with Rebeka Kivuli on 22nd April 1987 at Nineveh; and interview with Joel Andany on 22nd February at Kaimosi.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. B.A. Ogot and Welburn. \textit{op. cit.}, p. 82.

5. Ibid.

5. see F.A Okwemba's interviews with Rev. Kivuli in March 1967 in Historical Association Archives. File No. VCN/HD/RP C/2/2/(2) DVP: interview with Orwa on 14th October 1986 at Ramba; and interview with Yahuma on 16th November 1986 at Nyamila.

7. Interview with Yahuma on 16th November 1986 at Nyamila.

*Nineveh was a place where stubborn sinners were converted by Jonah through God's intervention (see the Book of Jonah Chapter 2 and 3).
CHAPTER FOUR
THE DOCTRINES AND THE ORGANISATION OF THE CHURCH

4.0 Introduction

Before embarking on this chapter, it is important to state here that the author of this study is not a student of theology and cannot therefore be expected to go deep into a doctrinal discussion in so far as it affected the African Israel Church, or the churches from which it broke off. However, it is felt that this study would be incomplete without some indication of the beliefs and practices pursued by the AIGN. This would help to enlighten the study and make it more complete.

This chapter gives a brief historical examination of some of the fundamental beliefs and practices of the AICN with an intention to show which of the tenets of Christianity as generally understood, were stressed by the AIGN, and in what respect the AICN differed from other churches especially those from which it broke. It is also intended to show how the AIGN attempted to incorporate certain aspects of African values into its practices. Furthermore, the chapter gives a brief account of the organization and the administration of the AICN, and concludes by briefly discussing some administrative difficulties which were encountered at its inception as well as in later years.
4.1 The Beliefs and Practices of the AICN

As soon as the AICN had been founded, Kivuli and Orwa embarked upon evolving and teaching the new converts what later became major beliefs and practices of the newly-created Church. They were at pains to emphasise in these initial stages that, although the establishment of the AICN essentially represented a rejection of the European churches the new church did not intend to retreat into a purely African traditional way of life. They indicated that they would incorporate most of the good tenets of Christianity into the doctrine of the new church and would retain the Bible as the foundation of the beliefs and practices which the new church would adopt. Kivuli and Orwa went on to emphasise the fact that it was after their extensive soul-searching, reading and re-interpretation of the Bible that they discovered that most of what the European Missionaries believed, preached and often practised was not in accordance with the will of God. Thus, it was from the Bible that the AICN founders derived their strength and spiritual inspiration.

The practice started by the leaders of the AICN of reading and interpreting the Bible from the African point of view was an important departure from the foreign missionary-dominated church theology, doctrine and teachings. For the first time, the new church leaders had the chance to weigh various African traditional values and incorporate them in the AICN where they were convinced that these did not conflict with true Christian Gospel.
Unlike other churches, the AIGN was founded on the belief in the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The belief in the Holy Spirit and its manifestations in dreams, visions and prophecy featured more prominently over and above God the Father and the Son. Indeed, it was because of this apparent centrality of the Holy Spirit in the doctrine of the church that earned the initial converts, the title, Jo-Roho (i.e. People of the Holy Spirit) in the 1930s. Whereas the Pentecostal and the CMS also believed in the power of the Holy Spirit, the AIGN insisted that to be fully-fledged church members, individuals had to experience baptism in the Holy Spirit, which in other words literally meant receiving the Holy Spirit. This point was clearly illustrated by church hymns, testimonies and teachings which basically emphasised the message that baptism in the Holy Spirit was the only necessary condition for salvation.

The AIGN believed that through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they were able to feel the presence of God Himself by directly communicating with Him and also by receiving the power and the ability to overcome temptations. Everything done in this church was attributed to the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, the ability to successfully pray for the sick, preach the Gospel, compose hymns, sing well, speak in tongues and prophesy was claimed to be possible only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus to all the church followers, the Holy Spirit was - and still is - a living phenomenon amongst them. It was emphatically asserted by the faithful that it was the Holy Spirit which filled the first "Prophets", Filemona Orwa and Zakayo Kivuli, and inspired the emergence of the new church.
Dreams and visions were also regarded as being important aspects of the AICN beliefs and practices. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, the AICN believed that they were divinely inspired and that God often spoke to them through dreams and visions\(^5\). As already noted in the previous chapters, it was through this divine revelation that Orwa and Kivuli were called. Dreams and visions subsequently instructed the leaders and the members about the form of worship to adopt and similarly guided them on church laws and regulations\(^5\). The belief that God did speak to ordinary persons through dreams and visions distinguished AICN from most European-led churches. For this reason the AICN was regarded with suspicion and doubt not only in the CMS but also amongst the Pentecostal Church authorities\(^7\).

This belief that dreams were instructions from above to perform certain things was in harmony with the way dreams were traditionally regarded among the people of Western Kenya. In the pre-Christian Luo and Luyia communities, dreams were seen as channels through which messages from the ancestral world reached the living members of the lineages, clans and families. Child-naming, for example, largely depended on the name the parents dreamt about\(^8\). Thus, just as the people of Western Kenya believed that dreams were messages from their ancestors, so also did members of the AICN believe that through dreams, the Holy Spirit brought to them messages from God.

The AICN also believed in the gift of prophecy. This also had similarities with the traditional practice of sooth-saying amongst the Luhyia and foretelling of events by the Ajuoke and Jobilo (diviners)
amongst the Luo. These traditional "prophets" in the two communities mainly specialized in predicting about the future and discovering the unknown; just as the AICN "prophets" such as Paulo Petro Waore and Zedekia Musungu predicted future events and revealed hidden sins with inspiration from the Holy Spirit. The AICN "prophets" thus played the role of traditional diviners by declaring through revelation the hidden sins of others and future happenings. However, like all other Christian churches, the AICN taught against the consultation of traditional diviners, because as Rasmussen observes, it would tantamount to a denial of their Christian faith and a return to the worship of the Spirits. Thus, although the AICN had a firm biblical foundation in its belief in prophecy and such other things like dreams and visions, these beliefs were reinforced by their acceptance and adoption of the African cultural beliefs which it felt did not conflict with biblical teachings.

One of the practices which distinguished the AICN from the CMS and the Pentecostal Churches, from which it broke, was the observance of a different day of the week for worship. The AICN leaders substituted Friday for Sunday. This is because they felt that Friday was the proper Sixth day of the week when God is said to have rested. Friday was thus made the "Holy day". On Fridays, all activities were forbidden since the day was especially set aside for church services and public confession of sins. But Sundays were also regarded as days of rest during which members were expected to carry out evangelization activities through public processions.

The forms of worship adopted by the AICN also differed from the missionary-led churches. They included two different services; the daily morning prayer and the weekly Friday worship. For the morning prayers,
converts met before sunrise. This was usually a short service, consisting of only a few songs, prayers of thanksgiving and prayers of confession. It was often led by a church teacher or preacher. The weekly services were conducted by either pastors or church teachers if the former were absent. The services started at 9 a.m. and usually ended between 3 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. They mainly consisted of singing and dancing; using drums and jingle bells, punctuated by intervals of public confessions, reading of the Bible (mainly Old Testament) and receiving of the blessing from the presiding pastor for the day. Women often led in the songs whose tunes were derived from the African traditional rhythms. Most of these songs were original (composed by leaders) and tended to glorify the phenomenon of the Holy Spirit. The prayers for the day were always concluded by the repeated shouts of "Hallelujahs".

The AICN like all other Christian churches observed the sacred rite of Baptism. Through it, each believer was "initiated into the faith of the church and incorporated into the body of Christ". But the AICN differed from the parent churches in the manner in which it performed the process of baptism. Instead of either total immersion in water (Pentecostal) or the sprinkling of water (CMS), the AICN practised what they called "Spirit Baptism". This involved praying for the faithful, anointing them with oil and subsequently giving them new biblical names. The faithful then promised to live according to the will of God and to obey all church rules and their superiors. The AICN taught that baptism by water (John's Baptism) belonged to the period before the Spirit descended on all believers. Once this happened, baptism by water, according to them, was now rendered redundant.
It is also worthwhile to note that the AICN never observed the Eucharist. According to them, the blood and body of Christ after crucification was a one time symbol, performed by Christ himself\textsuperscript{16}. Hence the symbolism of bread and wine as observed by the Catholic and most Protestant churches became unnecessary. Thus, in the place of the Eucharist, the AICN practised the Gweth (Blessing) ceremony once every year to symbolise the "arrival" of the Holy Spirit and its descent on those who had not yet received it\textsuperscript{17}.

To conclude this section, it is important to underscore some of the important departures from the practices of the European missionary-led churches which have been observed in the AICN and which may be said to have contributed to its "Africanness". Nevertheless, all the believers in both AICN and the missionary-led churches were taught to look forward to life after death as expounded in the Bible, and here they had not only a common ground, but also a common goal.

4.2 The Organization and the Administration of the Church

At its inception, the AICN was simply a breakaway movement which for a while was tolerated by the then colonial administration as long as its members did not break the laws of the land. But between 1943 and 1944, after the church had gathered sufficient momentum and following, the colonial government began to take more note of it, and instructed the leaders to work out some constitutional provisions to govern its operations. In those early days, such provisions were merely in the form of undertakings given by the church leaders to the District Commissioner...
and local chiefs in areas where the church was operating. However, with the rise of political activities by Africans in the late 1940s and early 1950s, it became necessary to require any such organisations to legally regularise their status and to be registered with the Registrar of Societies in Nairobi. It was from these early provisions that the AICN prepared its constitution for this purpose and it was eventually registered in 1957.

It is instructive to comment briefly on these early provisions in the AICN which eventually evolved into the official constitution of the church at the time of its registration in 1957, in order to show how it differed, if at all, from the missionary-led churches from which it had broken off in the 1940s.

F.B. Welbourn clearly shows that in terms of faith and objectives, there was practically no difference between the AICN and the parent churches. When it comes to the actual provisions, there is some material deserving some brief comment.

Of much significance were the aims and objectives of the AICN as spelt out during 1943 and 1944. These were as follows:

i. To win people to Christianity.

ii. To establish Christian Fellowship among all races.

iii To teach that God is love, and people must love one another.

iv To teach the world that ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD and that Christ is the only Saviour who is willing
to lead us to salvation and making contrite hearts to be reconciled to God²⁰.

A brief comment is called for especially in relation to objective (ii) above. Early teachings of the church clearly show that Orwa and Kivuli intended this church to be for Africans because they taught that membership of the AICN was only open to Africans although it seems that for the official acceptability, this implied racialism and had therefore to be removed to make the church more acceptable to the colonial government ²¹. It was only in the late 1950s when the founders opened the membership of the church to other races so long as they agreed to abide by the tenets of the church. It is also important to mention that despite these later constitutional provisions, the church membership was largely confined to the Luhyia and Luo of Western Kenya. Every European was in fact regarded with high suspicion and doubt.²²

The 1943-44 provisional undertakings provided for the following category of office bearers:-

(i) The High Priest who was also the overall head of the church.
(ii) The Deputy High Priest - who assisted the High Priest.
(iii) The Chairman of the Executive Council, who also happened to be the High Priest himself.
(iv) The Administrative Secretary who was responsible for administrative matters of the church and who could be a layman.
(v) The Church Treasurer - responsible for the accounts and all financial matters of the church.
There were also provisions for annual general meetings to be held at Nineveh where all the above officials would be elected, replaced or appointed as the case may be. Many other church matters were also discussed at these annual conferences.

It is important to note that the 1943-44 provisional undertakings which eventually evolved into the church constitution drawn up in 1957 did not make provisions for the replacement of the High Priest, and this was to prove a major bone of contention in the later history of the church, as will be discussed in later parts of this study. It is also significant to note that major changes in these provisions were not to be tolerated in those early days unless they originated from the High Priest.

4:2.0 The Organizational Structure

As far as the organizational structure was concerned, the AICN adopted a centralized system of administration in which the High Priest was the overall and final authority. He was not only the overall head of the church but was also the only authority responsible for appointing all other important church officials. He spelt out all church rules and regulations which governed the rest of the church, and anybody who defied those rules and regulations was excommunicated. For example, from 1943 throughout the history of the church, the High Priest excommunicated several church officials who broke church rules. These included Elija Anjago, the Church Minister of Kano Ministry who had questioned why the High Priest spent church money as his own personal money. As one of our informants puts it, "his word was law and anybody who defied him was faced with expulsion
without trial".  Between 1942 and 1974, this high office was occupied by Zakayo Kivuli.

The administrative functions of the church were organized at two levels. The first was primarily concerned with the administrative duties of the church. The other mainly dealt with spiritual matters.

As far as the administration of the church was concerned, the AIGN had the following officers: the Chairman, the General Secretary and the Treasurer. Each of these officers had their assistants. Between 1942 and 1974, these offices were held by Kivuli, Isaak Ajega and Alexander Oguso respectively. After 1974, the position of the Chairman was occupied by Orwa, while Albert Boaz Nyang'or became the General Secretary; Oguso retained his post until his death in 1982. These officers were mainly responsible for organizing annual meetings, planning and executing development projects like building more churches, liaising with government authorities on all official matters, and handling matters relating to the welfare of the entire community.

On the other hand, the chief officers in the spiritual hierarchy were the High Priest, the Ministers, Church Peachers or teachers, and the church elders. As already stated, the position of the High Priest was occupied by Zakayo Kivuli until his death in 1974. Filemona Orwa was his assistant as well as the Mission's Chief Minister. Other important Ministers in that period included Zakaria Muzibwanyi (Nyang'ori Ministry), Ainea Babu (Maragoli Ministry) Charles Videngede (Tiriki Ministry) Charles Amuli (Bunyore Ministry), Elijah Anjago, (Kano Ministry), Alexander Astariko
Oguso (Kisumo Ministry), Joram Nyamanga (Nyakach Ministry), and Japheth Yahuma (Alego Ministry).

The officers in this category were responsible for all the evangelical work of the church, like organizing and officiating at church ceremonies such as marriages, baptisms, funerals and ordination of priests.\textsuperscript{22}

Some individuals could hold up to two offices in the hierarchy simultaneously. For example, until he died in 1974, Zakayo Kivuli was both the High Priest of the AICN as well as the Chairman of the church. Similarly, Alexander Oguso was also until his death in 1982, the Mission's Treasurer as well as the Minister of Kisumo Ministry.\textsuperscript{23} Filemona Orwa also held the position of the Chief Minister and the Pastor of Nyahera Pastorate between 1942 and 1974.\textsuperscript{24}

It has already been intimated that all these officers were appointed by the High Priest himself. According to Kivuli, it was not through his personal consideration that he appointed the right individual, but rather, that the power of God through the Holy Spirit guided the church and showed him who was eligible for leadership.\textsuperscript{25} These individuals were often people with very little education, if any, since the basic criterion for the appointment of leaders seemed to have been one's faith, spiritual strength and material contribution to the church.\textsuperscript{25} As personal appointees of the High Priest, church officers were expected to obey without question all the rules and directives that emanated from the former. Any officer who did not comply or defied these laws was sacked at the shortest possible notice.\textsuperscript{27}
With the exception of the High Priest who was a full-time cleric and was not supposed to have any other form of employment, all other officers were only part-time and only carried out their duties whenever it was convenient to do so. In terms of remuneration, the church did not have any form of salary for all its officers, nor did it pay for their upkeep. The High Priest and many of the church leaders who were equally unrewarded mainly depended on church contributions for their day-to-day upkeep. This was often too meagre, and on many occasions, the officers had to resort to diverting church funds for their own personal use instead of using them for the church projects which the funds may have been intended for.28

4.2.1 The Administration of the AICN

For the purposes of easier administration the whole church was divided into Ministries, each under the leadership of a Minister. Between 1943 and 1974, there were about fifty-nine Ministries (including those outside our area of study).

The largest and therefore most important of these included Kisumo, Nyang'ori, Kano and Tiriki Ministeries. The Ministeries were further subdivided into pastorates. About ten to thirteen pastorates formed one Ministry. In 1942, there were only three pastorates, namely, Nyahera, Jeprok and Ong'echi. By 1974, these had increased to one hundred and twenty-seven in our study area alone.29

The pastorates were headed by pastors and their main responsibilities included conducting services, baptising new converts and officiating at
funeral ceremonies. A pastor was also recognized as the leader in the local Assembly (congregation). Some pastors, namely Paul Petro Waore of Nyahera Pastorate and Zedekia Musungu of Chemuot Pastorate were most notable for their spiritual strength and became known as "prophets" amongst their followers.

Each pastorate consisted of seven Assemblies or individual congregations. But this depended on the size of the Assemblies concerned. For example, if an assembly was large enough, such as the one at Kajulu Location in Kisumu District, it could form a Pastorate or even a Ministry of its own.

Each Assembly was under the leadership of a local church preacher (church teacher). He was often assisted by the local church council of elders. Church preachers could also officiate in the Friday services in the absence of the Pastor. At other times, his main responsibilities involved reading passages from the Bible and making announcements in the church during the services. The figure below is an attempt to show the organizational hierarchy of the AICN church.

![Organizational Chart](image)

Fig. I: The organisational chart of the African Israel Church, Nineveh.
Apart from the central administration and the spiritual hierarchies, several specific departments were also established within the AICN structural system. Each department played a different role under the leadership of a Director. All directors were also appointed by the High Priest and as such were directly answerable to him.  

The first of these was the Christian Education Department (CED). This department mainly played an advisory role to the administrative body. The head of the department who was the High Priest himself advised the administrative machinery on the sort of educational programmes and policies the church should adopt.  

In Kisumu and Kakamega Districts, the CED engaged in two major projects. The first project involved sponsoring members to various educational institutions, conducting conferences, seminars, rallies and workshops for the youth. It also involved a programme which aimed at establishing libraries, bookshops, educational centres and providing Sunday school materials for the children.

The other department was the department for development. From the time of its establishment in 1955, this department was directed by Harun Mudegu. It was primarily responsible for all matters relating to the development of the church and its members. Its main function was to purchase, demarcate and survey church plots. It also engaged in profit-
making projects like making and selling handicrafts (pottery, basketry etc.) and also cultivating ushirika farms.\textsuperscript{35}

The third was the Evangelism department. This department undertook to plan and organize open air evangelistic rallies in schools, colleges, market places, towns, and other public places. It was also concerned with the spiritual upkeep of all the members. Assisting it was the Missions Department whose main concern was to ensure that the church ministers performed their missionary roles effectively.\textsuperscript{36} The two related departments were initially manned by Paul Petro Waore and Zedekia Musungu through whose great evangelistic activities and efforts it succeeded tremendously.

Finally, there was the Health Department. This department was headed by Jane Ligale (a trained nurse). It occasionally organized clinical health education programmes in the AIGN churches throughout Kisumu and Kakamega districts. The main objective was to educate the church members on methods of hygiene and general public health.\textsuperscript{37}

In looking back at all the administrative departments which were established by the AIGN Administration, it is found that from the very outset, financial limitations prevented their full realization and hence activity. The only exception was the evangelism department which was active right from the time of its inception in 1945, and which therefore succeeded in carrying out successful evangelistic crusades throughout Western Kenya, thereby enlarging the area of influence as well as the area of operation of the AIGN. The remaining departments also made some token
achievements but which would have been much greater had they succeeded in getting access to the much needed funds. For example, the Christian Education Department merely concentrated its activities on low-cost projects such as the organization of rallies, conferences, workshops and seminars for the youth; intended to assist church members as well as their families to get a sense of belonging to a living institution. The rest of the programmes intended for this department like establishing libraries, bookshops and educational centres remained more a dream than a reality.

4.3 Laws, Regulations and Prohibitions

Soon after its formation the AICN Church hierarchy adopted codes of conduct for its membership. Some of the observances could almost be regarded as having the finality of Church Laws, whereas others could merely be regarded as prohibitions and regulations. In this section a general treatment will be given to indicate the moral path selected for the membership by the church leaders, to give an idea of how the AICN differed from the parent churches. With the name "Israel" which suggested a sort of Jewishness for the church, it is no wonder that the AICN copied many laws and observances from the Old Testament, and in particular from the Book of Leviticus.

To begin with, the food taboos which were adopted by the AICN were directly based on the prohibitions found in the Book of Leviticus. These included the following among many observances:
(i) The converts were forbidden from eating such foods as fish without scales, pigs, and animals that had died of old age, illness or from animals which has been strangled.

(ii) The converts were forbidden from eating food prepared by non-converts, from sharing food or utensils with non-converts.

(iii) Animals for eating were supposed to be slaughtered by AICN converts, otherwise they would be unfit for consumption.

(iv) Also forbidden was smoking or the chewing of tobacco, drinking of alcohol, or even entering places where these things were sold or were being consumed. The banning of tobacco was based on the belief that it had hallucinogenic properties. Similarly, alcohol was also seen as destructive and likely to be damaging to health and the wellbeing of families.

(v) The faithful were forbidden from participating in various forms of dancing, involving traditional religious and medicinal practices; such as those involving the offering of sacrifices to gods.

(vi) During worship, the faithfuls were required to remove shoes before entering places of worship as a sign of humility.*

(vii) The faithful were also required to wear clearly identifiable robes (white) at all times to identify them from the non-converts. The white clothes and white caps or headscarfs

* The resemblance of these observances with those found in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:5 and Joshua 5:15) is quite striking. To the AICN founders the Old Testament appeared to be in harmony with the African culture.
were intended to be symbols of purity. It was a requirement to inscribe "A Israel N" on all clothes to be worn and even on other properties such as door posts, furniture, utensils etc., so that the converts could be clearly identified by other converts.

(viii) Because of their particular concern for health and hygiene all converts were required to construct and use pit latrines in their homes.

In conclusion it can be observed that the church leaders were determined to create a clearly identifiable and almost "elitist" community of converts. This can be said to have had a strong impact on would-be converts and to have attracted membership for the church.

4.5 Internal Weaknesses of the Church Organization

The establishment of the AIGN was a test for the Africans in a form of "self-government", and the administrative problems which they were likely to encounter were first and foremost related to lack of sufficient education, and the sheer lack of experience in administration. Kivuli as one of the founders and the overall head of the church was basically a low-grade (primary school) teacher but he had been fortunate enough to obtain some valuable experience in administration during the time when he was a supervisor of schools under the PAOC between 1927 and 1932. In the process of establishing an administration within the AIGN, Kuvuli had to rely on other Africans of the same educational background as himself and others who were almost illiterate. It is therefore quite clear that lack of proper
education of the leaders was one of the major weaknesses which the AICN faced from the very beginning.

It has been shown in the earlier part of this chapter that the AICN had adopted a church hierarchy which made provisions for the High Priest, Chief Priest, Minister and Pastors on Spiritual matters, and an administrative structure which consisted of the Chairman, General Secretary and the Treasurer. According to the structure adopted, Kivuli was supposed to provide spiritual guidance for the church leaving the administrative matters to those appointed to head the various sections, who in any case had to operate under the guidance of an Administrative Council. The Administrative Council was the policy-making organ. In practice, the entire structure existed and operated at the pleasure of Kivuli. He practically assumed all powers including those not intended for him. Apart from appointing and firing church officials at will, he made most decisions single-handed. In short, Kivuli operated the church as if it was his personal property. Naturally, this brought Kivuli into conflict with some of the church officials and members who tended to see church laws and regulations as the personal whims of Kivuli and therefore felt free to break them as often as they were made. For example, during the period under review three church Ministers, Elija Anjago of Kano, Joram Nyamanga of Nyakach and Ezekiel Ganira of Tiriki refused to submit church contributions to the Headquarters even when they were reminded to do so because they felt that funds in question were more needed at the local level for actual development than at the Headquarters. In their opinion the Headquarters already had much funds and was starving the branches by insisting on sending all collections there.
The consequences of the disobediences quoted above was the decision by Kivuli to excommunicate all the said Ministers, thereby creating a general feeling of uneasiness within the church.\(^{40}\)

The other administrative problem concerned the various church leaders who were in any case personal appointees of Kivuli. These leaders tended to disregard the feelings and views of the general church membership since their immediate objective became "to please Kivuli" and not to work towards the development of their congregations. As a result there was always a growing feeling of uneasiness between the church leadership and the general membership.\(^{41}\)

The final weakness in the AICN administration revealed itself in the area of financial management. The church had no regular source of finance and mainly depended on contributions from the members and well-wishers. As a result many of the church officials were not paid any regular salary, and this meant that they could only devote a small part of their time on administering the church in their respective capacities and areas. This might explain why some officials as those already mentioned found it inescapable to divert some of the church funds to their personal use as well as for the local administrative expenses.

4.6 Sources of Church Income

Having established the AIGN both Kivuli and Orwa had to come face to face with the realities of maintaining the church.
It has already been intimated that the newly independent church wholly depended on church members for its financial upkeep and the day-to-day running of the church. As part of their duty to the new church, virtually all members were required to make regular contributions to the church, both in cash and in kind.

There were four different types of contributions expected of each church followers.42 These were as follows:-

(i) **Mavuno** this literally means "harvest". Each member was expected to contribute their farm produce to the church each harvest period. The minimum contribution per member was one debe of maize or sorghum each period. This considerable amount of grain was often sold by the High Priest, and the proceeds used by himself and his family. A small part of the grain was, however, stored at the headquarters for entertaining church guests.

(ii) **Zaka** This was to be paid each month by all the followers. The minimum amount allowed was ten shillings for men and five shillings for women.

(iii) **Tithe** Each year every member was expected to pay a tenth of his total earnings. In every case the minimum amount allowed was twenty shillings for women and thirty five for each man.
(iv) Contributions to church building fund. Once again each church member was required to contribute to the building fund.

These mandatory contributions brought in considerably large amounts of money for the church and, in theory, the AICN was almost as well off as the mission-led churches in Western Kenya. In practice, however, a lot of these church funds were used by Kivuli and his family for their own maintenance and for entertaining their guests. Because Kivuli spent a substantial amount of church funds for the establishment of his own personal property, like the establishment of fish ponds, a coffee farm and for the purchasing of the grade livestock for the family, very little funds, if any, were left for other church activities. The building of the cathedral alone whose contributions realised considerable sums of money took more than ten years to complete (1961 - 1974). Kivuli on whom the control of all the church funds was vested did not always give regular accounting of the funds collected. By 1971, for example, many church members including Otieno-Jowi, Daniel Oguso, Joshua Okong'o, Joshua Obonyo, Yona Oravo, Elijah Anjago and Edward Ganira had started complaining about the way in which Kivuli handled church funds, in particular, the Church Building Fund. Elijah Anjago and Ganira were particularly vocal in pointing out that the church had taken too long to get completed considering the very large sums of money which the local churches as well as well-wishers had already contributed to the Headquarters. In a meeting held at Korowe Pastorate chaired by Ganira and Anjago on 12th February 1971, the two church leaders accused the Headquarters of draining the local churches of funds which could have been used for the completion as well as
the upkeep of the latter. They noted that the Headquarters in general and the High Priest in particular were exploiting the rest of the church membership both in kind and in cash.

During that meeting, the two church leaders resolved to start holding back contributions from their pastorates to the headquarters with a view to constructing their own local churches. This defiant attitude by Anjago and Ganira displeased Kivuli and Orwa so much that they resolved to expel the two Church Ministers from the AICN. The handling of this matter provides an excellent example of Orwa's unquestioning loyalty to Kivuli as already mentioned in the previous pages of this thesis.

To sum up, it is important to emphasise the fact that many of the problems which were later to be encountered by the church had their roots in some of the administrative weaknesses, examples of which have been given in the foregoing paragraphs. But one thing was very clear, and that was that a fairly viable church had been created with clearly well-defined religious foundations based on African culture, the Bible and the Holy Spirit. The challenges of self-government within the church-hierarchy were great, and the lack of proper education was a stumbling block to better management. Thus, a lot of the problems that were to be encountered in later years could directly be attributed to these inherent weaknesses in the administrative organisation of the church, rather than in doctrinal disagreements, which was more characteristic of the Missionary-led churches, and other breakaway churches in other parts of Kenya.
FOOTNOTES

1. All informants interviewed said this.

2. Ibid., interview with A.M. Ajuoga on 21st September 1987 at Kisumu; interview with Joram Aseli on 13th July 1987 at Kapsengere; interview with Aineea Babu on 7th August 1987 at Kapsengere; and interview with Filomena Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera.

3. F. Orwa, Ibid., interview with Wilkista Odongo on 3rd April 1987 at Luanda; interview with Miriam Amuli on 14th April 1987 at Luanda; interview with Joel Andanyi on 23rd April 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Meresea Adega on 30th August 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with Mary Adikinyi on 14th July 1987 at Ahero; and interview with Charles Rombe on 17th August 1987 at Nyabondo.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., See also Genesis 12:7-10; 2 Kings 3:11-12.

6. Interview with Rebeka Jumba on 22nd April 1987 at "Nineveh;" interview with Turfena Nedia on 12th August 1986 at Nyamila; interview with F. Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Aineea Babu on 7th August 1987 at Kapsengere; and interview with Joshua Obonyo on 19th March 1987 at Nairobi.

7. Trufosa Agai and Christopher were infact expelled from the PAOC for claiming divine revelation.


11. Ibid., p.91.

12. The purpose of the morning prayers was to dedicate the soul to God and ask Him to guide the faithfuls well in their day's errands.

13. Interview with Filemona Orwa on 21st October 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Ainea Babu on 7th August 1987 at Kapsengere; interview with Harun Mudegu on 14th July 1987 at Kisumu; and interview with Yona Angugo on 24th September 1986 at Karaten'g.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., See also D.J. Okong'o, Yalo gi Puonji; Mag Bishop Filemona Orwa, (Kisumu Press, 1976). p.3.

16. Ibid., p.3.

17. Ibid., p.3.

18. See the AICN constitution of 1957, p.1.


20. Ibid., p.90.

21. According to the provisional undertakings submitted to the District Commissioner of North Nyanza in 1944, Church membership was open to everybody (men, women and children) who confessed their sins and received the Holy Spirit.
22. Welbourn, visiting the church headquarters in 1960 had to be accompanied by Makerere Student members of the church in order to be received well.

23. Interview with Filemona Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Albert Boaz Nyang’or on 21st October 1986 at Ramba; interview with Joshua Dishon Okong’o on 21st October 1986 at Ramba; and interview with Doctor Otieno-Jowi on 14th July 1987 at Nairobi. (Dr. Otieno - Jowi is one of the most educated members of the Church).

24. Interview with Otieno-Jowi on 14th July 1987 at Nairobi.

25. Interview with Joshua Okong’o on 21st October 1986 at Ramba; interview with F. Orwa on 21st October 1986 at Ramba; interview with Ainea Babu on 22nd April 1987 at Kapsengere; and interview with Harun Mudegu on 21st July 1987 at Banja.

26. Harun Mudegu, Ibid.; interview with Albert Boaz Nyang’or on 21st October 1987 at Ramba; interview with Joshua Obonyo on 14th February 1987 at Nairobi; and interview with J. Dishon Okong’o on 14th May 1987 at Kakamega.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., interview with Dr. Okiri on 11th September 1987 at Nairobi. See also F.A. Okwemba, op.cit.

32. Okiri, Ibid.
33. Pastor Elijah Anjago of Kano Ministry was sacked and later expelled from the church in 1969 when he refused to submit his ministry's yearly contribution to Nineveh.

34. Kivuli spent a lot of funds to entertain his own visitors. These funds were meant to be used towards the building of the church at the Headquarters - Safina.

35. Interview with Jotham Chanzu on 27th May 1987 at Jeprok; interview with John Mweresa Kivuli on 27th May 1987 at Jeprok; interview with Samson Puoyo on 11th January 1987 at Korowe; and interview with Daniel Olilo on 13th June 1987 at Ong'ech'e.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.


40. Ibid., p. 2.

41. Ibid., p. 2.

42. Ibid., p. 4.

43. Ibid., p. 4.

44. Interview with Dr. Otieno on 11th September 1987 at Nairobi; and interview with Joel Andanyi on 21st October 1986 at Kaimosi; See also F.A. Okwemba, op.cit.

45. Ibid.
46. Anjago and Ganira formed their own independent churches which attracted many AICN members while Nyamanga joined the African Inland Mission.

47. Interview with Otieno-jowi on 11th September 1987 at Nairobi; and interview with Joel Andanyi, on 21st October 1986 at Kaimosi, see also F.A. Okwemba, op.cit.

48. These were gathered from the various interviewees contacted.

49. Interview with Otieno-jowi on 11th September 1987 at Nairobi; and interview with Joshua Okon’go on 25th May 1987 at Kakamega; interview with Daniel Olilo on 23rd May 1987 at Korowe; interview with Samson Puoyo on 23rd May 1987 at Korowe.

50. bid.

51. They even questioned why Kivuli should not pay for the services of church officials through whose efforts the church grew. They also asked why Kivuli continued to enjoy the services of church members who worked on his farm and tended the fish-pond virtually free of charge.

52. Elija Anjago was one of the closest supporters and oldest confidants of Filemona Orwa. During this controversy, however, Orwa tried to explain the fact that Kivuli used a lot of church funds by pointing out that Kivuli as the High Priest of the AICN, was responsible for entertaining many church guests and was therefore, not really misappropriating church funds.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE GROWTH OF THE AICN

5.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the spread and the growth of the AICN from the two centres, namely, Nyahera in Kisumu Location and Gimarakwa in Nyang'ori Location (also known as Nineveh) to the surrounding Locations and Districts. Naturally, the areas which were initially affected by the growth of the AICN were those in close proximity to the two centres mentioned above. This means that the AICN was spreading amongst the Luhyia population of Kakamega District on the one hand, and the Luo population in Kisumu initially and Siaya District at a later date on the other. In this chapter, efforts will be made to follow the activities of the main actors in the spread of the teachings of the church, the methods they used and, finally, the areas they influenced during the period under consideration. Of equal interest and relevance to the understanding of the growth of the AICN is the social background of the members who joined the new church as well as their reasons for joining the AICN. Lastly, the chapter will attempt to discuss the impact of the church on its environment and of the repercussions of its spread on other churches in the area under discussion.

5:1 The Growth and Spread of the Church

Once the first AICN churches had been erected at Nyahera and Gimarakwa in 1941 and 1943 respectively, the two founders, Filemona Orwa and Zakayo Kivuli embarked upon the heavy task of spreading the church into areas
Where it was still unknown. They agreed between themselves to adopt a locational strategy which was that Filemona Orwa was to spread the church amongst his own people (the Luo of Kisumu District), while Kivuli was to concentrate his activities in Luhya-land, i.e. present-day Kakamega District.

Between 1943 and 1948, the two churchmen covered large areas within their respective regions. They visited various market places, attended funeral ceremonies, and preached at other churches in their respective areas. They also organized frequent public prayer meetings which consisted of open air sermons, testimonies from converts about their experiences with the Holy Spirit and confession sessions at market places usually on market days.1 During such meetings, they primarily taught about the faith of the new church. The basic tenets of their teachings and preachings concerned the purifying power of the Holy Spirit, the importance of regular confession of sins and the idea that eventual "wokofu" or "warruok" (salvation) was only possible through the public confession of sins and genuine repentence.2 They prayed ardently for the power of the Holy Spirit to "descend upon the members of their communities" and urged those who attended the meetings to confess all their sins and join the new church, whose primary responsibility was to bring salvation to the Luo and Luhya of Western Kenya.3 Kivuli taught the people gathered to confess as follows:

"Gitulizwe Saitan, Usamehe Yesu"4
(Go away Satan, Forgive me Jesus)
Soon the religious status of both Orwa and Kivuli changed from ordinary low status individuals to watume (prophets) who had direct communication with God. They claimed to have got the Holy Spirit gifts of prophecy, dreaming, speaking in tongues, seeing visions and performing miracles. These were, according to their testimony, all aspects of divine revelation. Through visions, God directed them in all their activities, including where to evangelise, what to teach, what rules and regulations to follow and what prohibitions to make.

Gradually, the two centres, namely Nyahera and Gimarakwa, also turned into important "villages", and were eventually seen as "Holy Places" comparable to Rome and Mecca where people often went to consult the two leaders, seek blessings from them and hear them preach, in short they went for a pilgrimage.

In the formative stages of the church, however, many people were very sceptical about the new church, and some of the people who attended the prayer meetings organized by the two leaders often thought that the "black missionaries" were insane. This was mainly because though literate, both Kivuli and Orwa were not people of particularly outstanding social status in their respective communities. For example, compared to the familiar, better-off, "clean", educated, and authoritative white Christian Missionaries, Orwa and Kivuli had no proper clothings or education and were generally poor. In other words, they were people whose sanity was in dispute, at least in the eyes of the majority of Africans amongst whom they were trying to spread evangelism. Also, the prayer meetings which Kivuli and Orwa in their respective localities often organized, especially at
market places, looked rather frantic, confused and often made them look like mad people. Consequently, only children loved to listen to the sermons given by the two leaders and often followed them as they moved through the villages. But even then, this was mainly out of the children's curiosity rather than out of religious convictions. The example given below strengthens this point.

In October 1943 Filemona Orwa and Paulo Petro Waore went to preach in Karaten'g, Korando and Kadongo sublocations in Kisumu Location. Then they went to Seme Location, several kilometres from Kisumu. They preached for several days at all these places. By the end of six days, only fifteen people had been won over to the AICN. Ten of these converts were children from Seme while the rest were women. A year later, Orwa and Waore went back to Korando to preach. This time they organized a successful public procession from Nyahera to Otonglo market in Korando. A big crowd from Nyahera joined the procession to Otonglo Market. This time, they were more successful. About fifty people from Korando and the neighbouring Kadongo sub-locations were converted and won over to the AICN. These included Daniel Nyesi and Ainea Onoka who, as disciples of Orwa, were to play an important role in the spread of the church. Through the initiative of these two converts the first AICN churches were established in Korando and Kadongo in 1944, and from here, the church spread to the outlying regions.

Similar setbacks were also experienced by Kivuli in the initial stages of his evangelistic crusades throughout Kakamega District. For example, in December 1943, Kivuli organized a public prayer meeting at Saride Market one Sunday afternoon. He preached and taught about the Holy Spirit, the
confession of sins and repentance. A large crowd gathered to listen to him. Many people showed interest and asked several questions about the new church. However, when Kivuli called upon them to confess their sins and join the new church, they booed, called him names and scattered in all directions. Only three little girls namely Seri, Masela and Vehedika remained behind to sing and pray with him. After the Saride incident, Kivuli moved to preach in Tiriki and Maragoli Locations between 1944 and 1946. It was in Tiriki that Kivuli met with success right from the very beginning and made many converts.12

From the very beginning Kivuli was a much more powerful preacher compared to Filemona Orwa. The spread of the church after the initial setbacks, was therefore more rapid in areas which were under the influence of Kivuli compared to the areas under Orwa. Apart from the spiritual power of Kivuli, AICN was more successful in Kakamega than in Kisumu District because as it was the AICN teachings were identical to the major teachings of the Spirit Movement which, as has been shown in the previous chapters, was already entrenched in Kakamega, and especially in Tiriki Location.13 Thus under the inspiration of the Spirit Movement, AICN spread considerably in Kakamega District. Kivuli's first converts were Mathias Muzibwanyi (his brother), Zedekia Musungu, Ainea Babu, Harun Angwen and Javan Kebeya. Zedekia Musungu and Javan Kebeya became important priests in their localities and were primarily responsible for the growth and development of the new church in Maragoli and Tiriki respectively.14

As has been intimated, the heavy task of spreading the church throughout Western Kenya was not entirely left in the hands of Kivuli and
Orwa alone. There were other individuals who also played significant roles in the growth and development of the AICN during the period under review. These were either appointed disciples of the two leaders who were given instructions to go out and spread the doctrines of the church, and then report back, or people who were working on their own initiative under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Many of the people who began to spread the AICN message on their own initiative were converted in Kakamega while working at the Rosterman Gold Mining Company. One such person was Alexander Astariko Oguso who received the Holy Spirit in 1944. Oguso abandoned his work and started preaching at Kakamega. His meeting with Orwa two months later reinforced his religious convictions. Orwa advised Oguso to go back to his home area and become a full-time preacher and spread the message of the AICN in his community. The message spread fast in Karateng' when Oguso started holding prayer meetings at market places and at funerals and at his home. His first converts were Rebeca Oloo, Teresia Chimba, Selina Ada and Elija Rambim. These people became the foundation of the AICN in Karateng'. By 1948, Oguso had converted about three hundred people. The AICN had also spread to Seme Location through Oguso's early converts such as Girson Okumu, Enoka and Andrea Adero.

One of Oguso's early converts, Athanasio Otierde spread the message to the settlement areas of Miwani, Muhoroni and Chemelil in 1947.

In Kano Location the first AICN converts, who eventually spread the message to the area, were also Rosterman Company employees. The most
prominent of these was Elija Anjago, who like Oguso, had received the Holy Spirit while working at Kakamega. Like his colleague, Anjago went back to his home area, Kano, where he started preaching in 1945. In October of the same year, Filemona Orwa sent two women catechists from Nyahera—namely, Susana Otieno and Dina Awuor—to go and help Anjago with the evangelical work and teach the new converts the rules and the regulations of the new church. The two women evangelists stayed in Kano for two months during which many people received the Spirit and were won over to the AICN. The first converts in the area. Olilo later became the pastor of the local church. According to Girsom Omedo, Samson Puoyo, and Charles Olilo, by 1948, Anjago had converted more than eight hundred people.

From Kano Location AICN influence spread to Nyabondo and Gem Rae area of Nyakach Location. In 1946, Joram Nyamanga and Kilines Mbuor had gone to a funeral at Ongeche Village in Kano, the AICN stronghold in the area. The two met Senior AICN members like Orwa and Joel Tito Odero. During the confession session, Nyamanga received the Spirit and joined the AICN. He went back to his home and started to preach and spread the new faith. Nyamanga was later appointed by Orwa as the representative of the church in the area.

In Kakamega District, the part played by Kivuli in the spreading of the AICN has already been commented upon. In the same way as for Kisumu District, there were many additional "Messengers" of the AICN who played a significant role in the spread and development of the new church. Among these were some individuals who had also been working in the Kakamega
Rosterman Gold Mining Company and who had similarly received the Holy Spirit at the same time as those already commented upon in connection with Kisumu District. One of those was Luka Charles Amuli who played a leading role in the growth of the AICN in Bunyore Location. He also took the church to Ebusalami Ebutindi, Eluchieho and Ebusudi in 1948, and to Emwuli, Musibambo and Ebayi between 1951 and 1954.

Meanwhile Ainea Babu was also regularly sent out by Kivuli to go and preach amongst the Maragoli and the Bukusu Tiriki. Several churches including the Bubai, which became the headquarters of the Bubai Pastorate were thus founded by Babu.

Although the AICN authorities did not keep proper church records about the population of the church members except for the officials, it was estimated that by 1948, the new church had about three thousand, two hundred and ninety members. This means that the spread and growth of the AICN in Western Kenya between 1942 and 1948 was slow and gradual. The main reason for this gradual spread was the fact which was earlier stated, that in the initial stages of the AICN, many people were very sceptical about the new church. Moreover, between 1942 and 1948, the AICN evangelists were primarily freelance and not ordained priests. Apart from the fact that they were mostly illiterate and inexperienced individuals, the evangelists also lacked the basic techniques of making the new church appealing to the people whom they wanted to convert. Often they became arrogant in their approach and tried to force people to confess, receive the Holy Spirit and join the new church.
Gradually, the missionary churches, especially the African Inland Mission in Kano, the Anglican Church at Maseno and many people in general began to spread information that the AICN evangelists were members of and worshipped the Rabodi (spirit) cult; and that they were inspired by the devil and not by the Holy Spirit. Consequently, several people including the children who had been initially excited by the public processions and the drum beating during the processions slowly began to withdraw from the AICN.

However, between 1949 and 1955, the new church once more began to experience a rapid growth and tremendous expansion in the area of our study. People joined the church in large numbers. Several reasons accounted for this. First, the period between 1949 and 1955 was an era of African nationalism during which there were several organized political groupings and frequent political uprisings throughout Kenya. These political and other organisations provided a sense of unity amongst the Africans in general, and also provided a platform where the colonial system and all its institutions, including their churches were criticised. In times like this, people tended to rally behind organizations like AICN which were African-led and which preached against white domination.

Also related to this was the fact that the suppression of Africans in the areas settled by white farmers increased during this period. Many farm labourers were leaving their jobs and going back "home" in Western Kenya. These ex-labourers decided to join new churches including the AICN in large numbers. For example, in 1952, the AICN registered six hundred and eleven new members in Kakamega District alone. Four hundred and twenty three out
of these were ex-labourers. They became active members and used the new church to condemn the white settlers and colonialism in general.24

Lastly, the AICN experienced rapid growth in the late 1940s and early 1950s because during that time, AICN leaders began to recruit a lot of their members, especially school teachers to carry out occasional evangelistic crusades. People like Isaac Ajega, Isaya Mugunda, Harun Mudegu and Otieno Olari became active evangelists. Using persuasive techniques, they won over many people to the Movement, and thus helped the church to grow.25

In their efforts to win new converts into the church, the early evangelists used various methods. The first of these was through organized public processions and public rallies. The leaders would first identify the places where prayer meetings would be held. In most cases, this would be either across the scattered villages, at market places or at trading centres. The converts would organize themselves at the local church and from here they would move to the target place where the public meeting would be held. At certain intervals, the procession would pause and preach, during which the leaders of the procession would call upon people to come and listen to them. In the early years of the church, public processions like these, were held on Thursdays, once every two weeks. Later on, the processions were organized every Sunday. Such processions became so popular and created a lot of public excitement especially in the late 1940s. Many people usually followed the processions and through them many were won over to the AICN and became active church members.
Another important method which was used by the AICN evangelists to win people to the new church was through exorcism or the removal of "devils".\textsuperscript{26} Traditionally, the people of Western Kenya viewed juogi (spirit possession) as an embodiment of prophecy, speaking in tongues and one of the powers given to certain individuals to control the spirits of nature. However, left uncontrolled, juogi often became violent and made those they possessed incoherent and sick. It could even cause harm to the Jo-Mangi Juogi (those possessed by Juogi). It was basically because of this that there existed some experts in the Luo and Luhyia communities who could control the Juogi in others and calm them whenever they became wild. Once the patients (those possessed by Juogi) consulted the experts, they regained control over the spirit in them and became normal again.\textsuperscript{27} This phenomenon of spirit possession was not understood by the Mission Churches. They consequently condemned it wholesale and always expelled those who became possessed by Juogi.\textsuperscript{28}

To deal with the institution of Juogi the AICN introduced exorcism as an important way of controlling the spirits so that they did not harm their hosts.

Many people who had been possessed by Juogi were brought to the AICN churches where the exorcism process took place. Using the Bible and prayers, and putting the former on the head of the patient, the AICN leaders cast out the demons from the patient by shouting out repeatedly and in unison, "Ogod Satan" (away with the devil).\textsuperscript{29} Through the method of exorcism, the AICN won many members during the period under review. As a
result exorcism became and remained part and parcel of the AICN technique of winning converts.

- Lastly, the AICN also spread through individual contacts. Individual converts would hold discussion sessions with their neighbours and friends during which they would convince the latter to join the new church i.e. personal proselytising.

In the beginning, the process of evangelization was carried out either on foot or on bicycles. The evangelists would either walk or ride to the market places, trading centres or across the villages where they would stop at intervals, preach and testify about the power of the Holy Spirit using tung (bull horn), drums and jingle bells. In the 1950s, when the use of motor vehicles became common, the AICN began to travel more frequently and more widely in their areas of operation. Consequently, they were able to cover even larger areas and bring more people under the influence of the AICN. Thus as the socio-economic conditions changed so did the pace of evangelisation quicken.

The period between 1957 and 1974 was one of consolidation for the AICN. The new church had spread its influence into much of Kisumu and Kakamega Districts and had consequently gained a large population of converts (estimated at 70,000 people) by the time its first constitution was prepared in 1957. As a result of this, the church leaders now decided to concentrate their efforts on undertakings which would enable the church to exist comfortably alongside other churches in the two areas and also strengthen its material foundations. These included the promotion of
several capital development projects such as, the construction of permanent church buildings, the establishment of schools; as well as the training of women members by sending them to Government Training Institute (GTI) at Maseno, to prepare them for work amongst the new converts in different localities on a more permanent basis.31

Among the schools which were established during this period were Mbakoromo Primary School (Karateng'), Obede Primary School (Nyahera), Wan'gChien'g Primary School (Nyakach) and Kapscali Primary School (Nyang'ori Location). During the same period the AIGN also opened two shops at Kisumu and Kakamega towns respectively, to generate funds for church development and particularly to raise funds for the construction of the cathedral at the headquarters (Nineveh).

The church also encouraged the church members particularly women to involve themselves in other income generating activities such as the making of handicrafts (baskets, mats, pots and crotchetings). These could be regarded as the early forms of education for "self-reliance" for the faithful. It can therefore be seen that in the absence of foreign sources of funds, a feature which was quite common in the mission churches, the AIGN set itself clearly on the path for financial and spiritual independence, from these early days, and thereby ensured its own survival into the present period. This feature of the growth and development of the church became fairly evident as soon as substantial membership had been built both in Kakamega and Kisumu Districts.
The majority of the poor and illiterate people who joined the AICN did so because the new religion seemed ready to accommodate them with a lot of their cultural values and their total way of life for which they had been rejected by the Mission Churches. From the doctrines and early teachings of the church, it could be discerned right from the outset that the new Church was set towards reconciling Christianity and traditional African values. The AICN tended to tolerate certain African practices, particularly those it felt did not conflict with the teachings of the Bible, and accommodated those people who had been either expelled from, or refused admission in the Mission Churches because they had not abandoned the said practices. It was this tendency to tolerate and accommodate the Africans and their culture that made the AICN quite attractive to many people right from the formative stages of the new Church.

As an example of the tolerance of the new church, the AICN converted everybody including polygamous families, and welcomed those who had been expelled from the Mission Churches. AICN leaders also baptised children of polygamous families who had been refused baptism elsewhere before. The leaders often taught that polygamy was not contrary to the teachings of the Bible. They gave this assertion a biblical backing by pointing out that great biblical personalities like David and Solomon were, in fact, polygamous. As a result of this tolerance, Athanasio Otiende, Teresia Chimba, Magdalina Waruku, Paulo Ombei, Roshena Ligale, Patrick Chweya and Trufosa Wan'goya who had been expelled by the CMS from Maseno in 1936 joined the AICN in 1944. Trufosa and Magdalina became very active members
and converted many more women from polygamous families who had been refused sacrament and expelled from the CMS for being second wives. As a rule, however, polygamous members of the AICN were not assigned any church responsibilities. The reason for this was that the church felt that polygamous members already had too many responsibilities of caring for big families, thus giving them church work would create extra burden for them.

The AICN was also attractive because it recognized the menace of witchcraft and the existence of the belief in the ancestral spirits. Instead of expelling those who consulted witchdoctors to solve their personal and family problems and those who got possessed by Juogi like was the case with the Mission Churches, the AICN accommodated them and tried to deal with the problems through the Ministry of the Church and through faith healing. In particular cases of spirit possession, the AICN sought to heal and free those affected by the demons through the process of exorcism. As has already been stated in the previous sections of this chapter, exorcism was an important part of the healing process by the AICN leaders. Quite often, many of those who got physically healed either temporarily or permanently, became active members of the AICN.

As far as magic was concerned, the church did not regard the practice as an offence. In most cases, those who consulted magicians were taught and encouraged to have faith that their problems could be solved if they accepted Jesus and received salvation through confession and repentance; and, above all, if they received the Holy Spirit. Such members were
literally taught how to confess and the whole church prayed for them so that they could receive the Holy Spirit. In cases where the problems persisted, the Church allowed the victims to consult the magicians. For example in 1968, the wife of Elijah Asahi a prominent Church member became mentally sick. For a long time, the Church could not cure her through prayers. Later on, Elija Asahi was allowed to consult a witchdoctor while the Church continued to pray for his sick wife.

Thus the AICN provided "a place to feel at home" for those whose lives had been disrupted by the introduction of orthodox Christianity. Christianity was expecting too much too soon because people were expected to abandon the time honoured and cherished traditional cultures without offering an adequate alternative and without telling them how a lot of their personal or family problems would be solved. The new brand of Christianity which AICN provided was therefore appealing to the people who had been bewildered by the demands of orthodox Protestantism. Even those who chose to accept the "new life" as was prescribed by the Mission Churches soon found themselves in conflict with the new ideas and either lived both African and Christian lives or abandoned Christianity.

The other factor which played a significant role in the growth of the AICN was the divine and charismatic personalities of Zakayo Kivuli and Filemona Orwa. These two founders of the church were considered as "Prophets" chosen by God to be the interpreters of His Will for the Luhya and Luo Communities and guide them on their way to salvation. In the view of their followers, the two Prophets were the intermediaries between God and mankind and it was only through them that everybody seeking redemption
had to pass, irrespective of race or sex. This view was reinforced by a vision which Kivuli saw in 1947. According to his own testimony, "God appeared to me in a dream and commanded me to guard His door. There were God's instructions on the wall which told anybody who wished to knock at the door to get permission from me first". Hence, Kivuli and "the people of Israel" (members) became a chosen people. Through him, redemption was possible. This implied direct communication with God by Kivuli seemed to have been the source of the Movement's dynamism and the driving force behind it. Filemona Orwa also claimed the same ability to communicate with God as did Kivuli.

Kivuli's leadership qualities included his commanding personality which enabled him to unite people and to turn the church in the direction of his ambition and to bring order whenever there was chaos.

The personality of Kivuli, his spiritual power and his leadership qualities made him capable of commanding obedience and respect from all the members of the church. Certainly it was because of this that he managed to hold together the disparate ethnic groups which formed the basis of the AICN membership.

It will be argued in chapter six that the lack of a leader with charisma equal to that of Kivuli was one of the main factors which later led to the crisis within, and the split of, the AICN during the later years of the church.
The AICN had carved itself a new religious territory in an area which was originally occupied by a multiplicity of denominations and often competing Christian Missions from Europe and North America. As has been earlier stated, most of the people who had been won over to the AICN had either been expelled from the Mission Churches or had left on their own choice to join the new Church. As a result of this, the Mission Churches in the area naturally felt threatened by the presence of the AICN and made efforts to frustrate its spread. In some instances there was an open conflict between the Mission-led Churches and the AICN. For example, in 1947, Reverend Innes of the A.I.M. at Nyakach made an official complaint to the Chief of Nyakach Location about the activities of Joran Nyamanga, the local AICN Priest. He accused Nyamanga of practising religious hooliganism and sought official intervention to put a stop to this. He hoped that Nyamanga would be stopped from preaching in the area, and the threat of AICN removed from the sphere of influence of the A.I.M. in Nyakach. Unfortunately for Innes, the area Chief after making some inquiries did not oblige the Reverend Innes.

Like the A.I.M. example given above, other Mission-led churches also showed animosity to the converts of the AICN. The Catholic Church at Withur (Kano) expelled the children of the AICN converts in 1952 from their schools, accusing them of trying to indoctrinate other children about the Holy Spirit.
The GMS in Maseno was also reported to have sacked one teacher from their school for having testified about the Holy Spirit.\(^{39}\)

Inspite of the above quoted acts of open hostility, the Mission Churches found it difficult to officially dislodge the AICN because the administration did not find it necessary or even possible to ban the AICN so long as it did not break the laws of the land.

The years between 1950 and 1960 saw the birth of several new independent churches in Western Kenya. These included the African Divine Church, the Roho (Spirit) Church, the Church of Christ in Africa and the East African Spirit Church. Technically, these churches had sprung up more or less in the same area as the AICN and theoretically there was a competition for the same flock. Inspite of this the author found in the course of field work very little evidence of confrontations between the new independent churches and the AICN. Instead there appears to have arisen some healthy competition between the independent churches. For example, all these churches realized that they had to train their clergy and they proceeded to collect funds amongst their followers for this purpose. The example of the AICN was followed by the other independent churches, for instance in constructing church buildings, opening up primary schools and encouraging their followers to engage themselves in economically beneficial occupations to provide funds for development.\(^{40}\)

The emergence of independent African churches created a new constituency in Western Kenya which the political leaders of the country wanted eagerly to be associated with. This was because the churches were
wholly African and they attracted the politicians who were fighting for political independence and who saw them as natural allies. For example, the author found numerous records from the church files at the AICN headquarters showing that prominent political personalities like Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga and Achieng Oneko visited the AICN Headquarters during the 1950s and 1960s and obtained a blessing from the church leadership. Soon after independence the AICN church leaders were invited to pray for the newly independent government and thereby to endorse at least in principle the new political programme.41

In conclusion a few observations need to be made by way of summary. First, because of the way the church had spread, the Luhyia followers in Western Kenya looked up to Kivuli as their spiritual leader whereas the Luo converts saw Orwa as their spiritual leader. This means that from the very beginning there were two different wings of the AICN operating at the same time, and it was only the close personal link between Kivuli and Orwa which made the church to appear as one. Secondly, by the end of the 1950s, the church had acquired a large enough number of followers and had established its own religious credibility to ensure its continuity into the future. Finally, because of what it stood for the church had helped to produce a cultural revival amongst the African followers in Western Kenya. All the above had helped it to acquire a modicum of stability and respectability in the eyes of the followers and the administration. In the next Chapter, an examination will be made of the trials which the church was to undergo in the 1970s following the death of Zakayo Kivuli, one of the two founders of the church.
FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with F. Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Josphina Owuondo on 23rd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Rebeka Jumba on 11th June 1987 at Nyang'ori; interview with Miriam Amuli on 17th April 1987 at Luanda; and interview with Mudegu on 28th June 1987 at Banja.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Interview with Rebeka Jumba 11th June 1987 at Nyang'ori; interview with Turfena Nedia on 2nd September 1986 at Nyamila; and interview with Jotham Chanzu on 11th June 1987 at Nyang'ori.

5. Ibid., interview with F. Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; and interview with Japhet Hahuma on 21st February 1987 at Nairobi.

6. Ibid.

7. Interview with Jotham Chanzu on 11th June 1987 at Nyang'ori; and interview with Mathilda Aseli on 24th September 1987 at Kiboswa; and interview with Elkana Otenyo on 17th May 1987 at Luanda.

8. The meetings were composed of Spirit-filled people shouting indiscriminately at intervals. "Ogol Saltan: hul richo" (Cast away the devil and repent). Then followed confused moments when converts confessed all at the same time, thumping their feet and shouting at the top of their voices.

9. Interview with Jane Omoka on 30th November 1986 at Otonglo; interview with Nyargunga Migot on 5th December 1986 at Nyatigo; and interview with Daniel Nyesi on 16th December 1986 at Kisian.
10. Interview with Jane Onoka on 30th November 1986 at Otonglo; interview with Ainea Onoka on 1st December 1986 at Otonglo; interview with F. Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Josephina Owuondo on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; and interview with Paulina Odero on 27th April 1987 at Nyahera.

11. Interview with Jothain Nyadida on 17th May 1987 at Saride; interview with Anderea Ludeki on 20th May 1987 at Saride; interview with Jotham Chanze on 4th June 1987 at Maragoli; and interview with Rebeka Jumba on 11th June 1987 at Nyang'ori.

12. Ibid., interview with Elkana Otenyo on 27th April 1987 at Luanda.

13. See E.M. Kasiera op.cit., pp.64-78.


15. Interview with Rebeka Oloo on 16th September 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with Teresia Chimba on 18th September 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with Mary Adikinyi on 18th September 1986 at Karaten'g; and interview with Christopher Adero on 20th September 1986 at Karaten'g.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Interview with Daniel Olilo on 23rd April 1987 at Ahero; interview with Abednego Sunga on 26th May 1987 at Ong'eche; interview with Daniel Muore at Ahero on 17th May 1987; and interview with Roslida Olilo on 18th May 1987 at Ong'eche.

20. Ibid.
12. The estimates were based on Baptism records of the church.

22. There were several reported incidents in 1946 at Nyang'ande (Kano) Butsotso, Jimo Olwalo and Shivagala where evangelists tied some people, brought them to the local church and forced them to repent.

23. Interview with Otieno Okiri on 11th September 1987 at Nairobi; interview with Charles Olilo on 23rd April 1987 at Ong'ech; interview with Habib Andele on 17th June 1987 at Ebuchiegwe; and interview with Miriam Amuli on 18th June 1987 at Luanda.

24. Interview with Otieno Okiri on 11th September 1987 at Nairobi; interview with Timotheo Asalu on 27th April 1987 at Nineveh.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Interview with Mary Nyagode on 9th June 1987 at Nairobi.

28. Ibid.

29. Interview with F. Orwa on 22nd October 1986 at Ramba; interview with Penina Odero on 22nd October 1986 at Ramba.

30. Quoted from the first AICN constitution 1957, p.1

31. Worked amongst members as health advisors on matters of hygiene, childcare, nutrition and general public health.

32. Interview with Trufosa Wan'gaya on 12th December 1987 at Luanda; interview with Miriam Amuli on 27th April 1987 at Bunyore; interview with Elkana Otenyo on 26th May 1987 at Bunyore; and interview with Teresia Chimba on 23rd October 1987 at Karaten'g.

33. Ibid.
34. Interview with Yona Orao on 22nd August 1986 at Karaten'g; interview with Filemona Orwa on 6th October 1986 at Nyahera; and interview with Solomon Opondo on 6th October 1986 at Nyahera.

35. Interview with Teresia Chimba on 23rd October 1987 at Karaten'g; interview with Opondo Kaitalo on 24th August 1987 at Karaten'g; interview with Filemona Orwa on 6th October 1987 at Nyahera; and interview with Joel Andanyi on 28th September 1987 at Kaimosi.

36. Interview with Joel Andanyi on 28th September 1987 at Kaimosi.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.
CHAPTER 6

THE CRISIS OF SUCCESSION

6:0 Introduction

In the foregoing chapters of this study we have demonstrated that the history of the AICN revolved around the careers and the leadership of David Zakayo Kivuli and Jackson Filemona Orwa. We have also demonstrated that the Luhyia and the Luo Communities of Western Kenya constituted the majority of the rapidly growing church membership. Despite the spatial expansion and the numerical growth of the AICN there were a number of problems which bedevilled the church. These were for a long time contained by the charismatic leadership of Kivuli, and the total loyalty of Orwa to Kivuli. However, towards the end of Kivuli's life, the crisis of succession unfolded and this, eventually, led to the breakup of the church. It is the purpose of this chapter to trace the causes of the crisis, to analyse its consequences, and to assess its impact on the AICN.

6:1 Causes of the Crisis

Zakayo Kivuli as the High Priest of the AICN worked harmoniously with Filemona Orwa, his deputy, until 1974 when he (Kivuli) died. Throughout their partnership, the two remained close spiritual companions and good friends. Their good working relationship was often seen in their close cooperation when organizing and conducting important church functions like the ordination of priests, the Blessing of the
Congregations (*Gweth* ceremony) and when conducting wedding ceremonies in most parts of Western Kenya. During their many years of working together, Kivuli and Orwa also trusted and respected each other.¹ As has already been stated in the closing pages of the last chapter, it was this respect and trust, but above all, the close spiritual association that partly made it possible for the two leaders to work closely together and succeed in uniting the disparate ethnic members of the AICN. As a result, they steered the church into greater development and prosperity.

It has been stated at the beginning of this chapter that the death of Zakayo Kivuli precipitated a serious crisis which subsequently led to the split of the AICN. Looking back at the events which followed the death of Kivuli, it would be instructive to analyse the real causes of the crisis as it unfolded.

One of the most significant causes of the crisis was constitutional. During the history of the AICN and during Kivuli's time as the High Priest of the church, no rules of succession had been formulated and agreed upon by the church hierarchy. Indeed, it was merely assumed, or even speculated that under normal circumstances Filemona Orwa would succeed Kivuli as the leader of the church Orwa himself was party to this assumption. The assumption was, however, surrounded by a lot of ambiguity as there were no rules or regulations to guide the remaining church leaders on how the process could be carried out in the event of Kivuli's death. The absence of clear-cut constitutional guidelines
created uncertainty after the death of Kivuli and certainly gave a lot of room for the power struggle which followed.

Even though the constitutional position was undecided, the situation could have been saved and the crisis averted had there existed a clear and unequivocal will left by the late Kivuli about his succession. The available evidence from both Kivuli and Orwa's followers showed that during his lifetime, Kivuli had led the Church elders and the general AICN membership to believe that in the event of his death, the Church leadership would be automatically handed over to his deputy, Filemona Orwa. According to the testimonies of Ainea Babu, Joel Andanyi, Josphina Owundo, Miriam Amuli and Albert Boaz Nyang'or, who were amongst the oldest members of the Church, Kivuli first made the public will during a church service at Kaimosi in April 1972. He stated then that in the event of his death, Filemona Orwa would take over the leadership of the Church. He repeated the same will on another occasion during a blessing ceremony held at Nyamila Alego on February 1973.2

Apart from these public pronouncements, there were other actions by Kivuli which also suggested that Filemona Orwa was his chosen successor. For example, on one occasion, during his terminal illness, Kivuli told Filemona Orwa in the presence of Joshua Muga and Rebeka Jumba to give constant spiritual guidance to the remaining church leaders and the general membership of the church when he is "no more".3

The AICN church leaders and the general membership of the church responded to these pronouncements in two opposing ways. While all
Orwa's followers supported the succession will, some of the long-time supporters and close confidants of the High Priest opposed it. The opposition group which was led by Joram Mshang'ole and Zedekia Musungu justified their opposition on two main grounds.

First, they claimed that Filemona Orwa was a leader of a faction within the AICN. This meant that his leadership would divide the church's congregations instead of uniting them. The second argument was that Filemona Orwa was a weak man and that his leadership of the church would allow ethnic rivalries to creep into the church.

In July 1973, the opposition group armed with these arguments sent a delegation first to the Secretary-General and later to the High Priest to seek further clarification on the issue. The Secretary-General refused to comment on the ground that the issue was beyond his control. When the High Priest was approached, he confirmed the succession will and justified his choice of Filemona Orwa on two main grounds. First, he argued that Orwa had the spiritual strength and the experience required to guide and lead the AICN. He went even further and justified his choice of Filemona Orwa on religious grounds, saying that he had received a revelation from God instructing him to handover the leadership to Filemona Orwa.

Three weeks after the delegation led by Mshang'ole went to make representations on the High Priest against Filemona Orwa, the AICN church authorities announced the expulsion of Joram Mshang'ole and his close supporters from the AICN.
The expulsion of Mshang'ole and all the "dissidents" who had participated in the delegation against Filemona Orwa clearly demonstrated that Kivuli still held Orwa in very high esteem, and was not prepared to tolerate open rebellion against him. It also made it clear that up to that point Kivuli favoured Orwa as his spiritual successor. Indeed it can even be argued that by nominating Filemona Orwa to succeed him in the church leadership even in the face of such stiff opposition and open defiance, Kivuli wanted to show that he was not only forever grateful, but also that he still acknowledged the very important role Orwa had played during the formative stages of the AICN. The closeness between the two spiritual leaders and partners, their cooperation since the 1930s, and the respect with which they held each other prevented them from succumbing to the apparent threat of the split of the church which this wave of opposition more or less entailed. Theirs had been a true and sincere comradeship which even the trials of time, such as the loss of prominent church supporters and close confidants, had failed to disintegrate. The very existence of the church in its strong form at the time was a clear testimony to their labours over a period of over 40 years, and to their spiritual partnership.

The implications of the expulsion of Mshang'ole and his "dissidents" underlines the fact that whatever may be said of Kivuli just before he died, his sincerity to Filemona Orwa was clearly unquestionable. It therefore required very persistent efforts on the part of the opponents of Orwa to erode Kivuli's confidence in Orwa. Unfortunately, this is what happened in the following year (1974) just before Kivuli died.
Just before his death in 1974, Zakayo Kivuli had gone the full circle from his unshakeable confidence in Filemona Orwa to the point where he now literally was prepared to abandon his long-time friend. What really happened? This is a question which requires careful examination before one can provide a satisfactory answer to it. Nearly all respondents revealed that by the time of Kivuli's death in November 1974 the relationship between him and Filemona Orwa had soured so much that he was prepared to "dethrone" his long-time friend from the church leadership. This became clear when it was eventually revealed that Kivuli had indeed written a will in which he passed on the leadership of the AICN to his son in law, Harun Mudegu, rather than to Filemona Orwa.

This important turn of events was difficult to believe, let alone, explain, but in retrospect it appears to have been brought about by one factor, namely Kivuli's terminal illness. Early in 1974 David Kivuli accompanied by his usual entourage had travelled to Nyakach Location in Kisumu District, at the invitation of the local pastor, Amon Arach, to conduct a Gweth (Blessing) Ceremony. Kivuli spent three days in Nyakach and apparently caught malaria before he travelled back to Nineveh. At this point, the opponents of Orwa were quick to allege to Kivuli that he had been bewitched by Orwa's followers, with a view to making it easy to take over the leadership of the church on the death of Kivuli. Apparently the opponents of Orwa managed to convince Kivuli that indeed he had been betwitched, especially when the purported malaria attack refused to go away and progressed into a terminal illness. Thus the sickness of Kivuli was exploited by the "enemy camp" very cleverly to
oust Orwa from the church leadership. Once Kivuli had been prevailed upon to believe that he had been bewitched by Orwa's supporters, he gave in to ethnic pressure and prepared a written will which named Harun Mudegu (his son-in-law) as his spiritual successor. Up to this point, Orwa's opponents had mainly been underground, and even Kivuli himself was not always aware of the clandestine and destructive activities of this group, but once they had achieved their purpose they not only surfaced, but did everything to make sure that their plans succeeded.

In the course of fieldwork the author found plenty of evidence from the supporters of both Kivuli and Orwa which indicated that incessant pressure had indeed been exerted on Zakayo Kivuli, a terminally ill man, and it is therefore not surprising that he eventually succumbed to the pressure. Apart from the allegation of witchcraft, it was also learned that two of the opponents of Orwa, namely Zedekia Musungu and Ainea Babu, had threatened to quit the AICN in the full hearing of the sick Zakayo Kivuli. All these were cleverly calculated first and foremost to get Kivuli to change his mind about Orwa, and secondly to prepare a written will alienating him completely from the church leadership. In the face of all these pressures, it is not difficult to see why Kivuli succumbed and prepared a written will in the presence of several witnesses.

Unlike the previous occasion where the opponents of Orwa had been expelled from the church, this time the group was clever enough to hide, their true intentions and their true identities to avoid expulsion. In any case, Kivuli's health was progressively failing, and he was no longer in a physical condition to exercise his authority as the High
Priest. Thus, in attempting to explain the turn of events, it is really not necessary to question the sincerity of Kivuli towards Filemona Orwa; rather, it is more important to understand the successful machinations of the group which was determined to see that Orwa did not succeed Kivuli. Finally, with Kivuli dead and Orwa's opponents armed with a will prepared and signed by Kivuli in his last days, it was possible to predict the chronology of events leading to the final split of the church. To the extent that Filemona Orwa was still able for a few months to take control of events testifies to his strength of character and to his experience in church matters. However, before such judgements are made, it is necessary to analyse the developments subsequent to the death of Kivuli in order to put matters in proper focus before venturing to comment on the various actors in this important drama.

The circumstances surrounding the preparation of a will by the late Zakayo Kivuli before his death were examined at length in an attempt to show how various interested parties intervened with a view to "sharing the spoils" of the AICN after the death of one of the two founders. It is clear that even though Kivuli wrote the will and even blessed it before he died he was manipulated into so doing because he was no longer in his full faculties. At this stage it is important to look at what was contained in the said will before further comments can be made, because as recorded it reflected more the views of Kivuli's followers than of Kivuli himself. The will was written only a few days before Kivuli died and it was as follows:-

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I, M.P.D. Zakayo Kivuli who founded the AICN more than 30 years ago wish to state here my wishes which are also the wishes of my creator as follows:

1. My body must be preserved for three days before burial.
2. My followers must mourn for three months.
3. The leadership of the church must be given to Harun Mudegu, the School Teacher who served as my Personal Secretary, and not to Jackson Filemona Orwa as I had previously stated.

Present to witness the writing of the will in a small black book were 17 persons including Paulo Petro Waore, Ainea Babu, Zedekia Musungu, Bethulmeo Masamba, Samson Busitsa, Walter Owuor, Benjamin Oyanje and Harun Mudegu. It is important to note that though Filemona Orwa was at the church headquarters at the material time, he was carefully excluded from the ceremony by his enemies. The three surviving witnesses who were interviewed during the present study were nervous when they talked to the author and they asked her not to identify them by name for fear of victimisation by the church authorities. According to their accounts, Kivuli though weak and frail, wrote and signed the will himself, but obviously under the close direction and supervision of Ainea Babu and Zedekiah Musungu, his close confidants and right hand men.

After signing the will, Kivuli in imitation of the biblical Last Supper took a piece of bread, divided it and gave it to the 17 persons present whom he instructed to ensure that the information about, and contents of, the will were kept away from Filemona Orwa until after Kivuli's death.
A closer look at the will would seem to suggest that the words were "put into Kivuli's mouth", and that those interested people saw to it that he wrote them down as suggested to him. Even though there were 17 people in the room they did not (or were not asked to) sign the will in witness, as would have been required by law. Also a look at the composition of all those present, reveals that they were all Kivuli's supporters, and all, except one, were Luhyias. It is therefore not without foundation to suggest that the circumstances were calculated to breed suspicion and controversy, and the power struggle which followed became inevitable. The partisan secrecy surrounding the written will, and the manner of releasing it all bred suspicion and distrust. It can therefore be said that the will episode exacerbated the crisis which had been brewing quietly for several years and was thus instrumental in the final break-up of the AICN which subsequently followed.

6:2 The Power Struggle:

Zakayo Kivuli died on 10th November 1974 on the eve of the church opening ceremony at Nineveh. As soon as his death was announced, an official meeting chaired by the Secretary-General was called. Those who attended the meeting included Filemona Orwa, Paul Waore, Rebeka Jumba, Joshua Muga, Ainea Babu, Zedekia Musungu, Harun Mudegu, Alexander Oguso, Amon Arach and Samson Busitsa. The initial purpose of this meeting was to make arrangements for the High Priest's funeral. In the course of the meeting, however, the issue of who had to be in charge of these arrangements arose. The Secretary-General proposed Filemona Orwa to take charge as he was considered the logical successor of the High
Priest. In contrast to this proposal, Samson Busitsa (a former confidant of the High Priest), backed by Ainea Babu and Zedekia Musungu, proposed Harun Mudegu. At this juncture, a fierce argument ensued during which the supporters of Harun Mudegu revealed that the late Kivuli had left a written will giving Mudegu the right to succeed him as the High Priest of the AICN.

Filemona Orwa's reaction to this startling information was to challenge Busitsa to produce the "alleged" will, stating further that even if the said will existed in form he highly suspected trickery on the part of Busitsa. He dismissed the "allegation" saying that it "could be nothing other than a fraud." Orwa's reaction gave rise to a stalemate which would have lasted for days, if not months, but on this occasion, both groups eventually agreed to disagree for the purpose of burying the High Priest. The burial ceremony therefore proceeded with Orwa officiating but with Busitsa promising to produce the alleged will at a later date.

Four months after the death of Kivuli, a general meeting was held at the AICN headquarters in Nyang'ori on 3rd March 1975. Representatives from various Church Ministeries, Pastorates, and Church Councils attended this meeting. Although the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues relating to church development programmes and also to endorse newly elected development committees, the issue of succession inevitably cropped up when Orwa began to chair the meeting. On this occasion, Zedekia Musungu demanded that Harun Mudegu instead of Filemona Orwa should chair the meeting. He justified his demand by producing the
"black-book" in which the will disowning Filemona Orwa and giving Harun Mudegu the right to succession was written. Musungu told the meeting that the production of the will on that occasion had been necessitated by the fact that "Filemona Orwa and his supporters had continued to oppose the wishes of Zakayo Kivuli by refusing to accept the succession of Harun Mudegu." By the production of the written will, the supporters of Harun Mudegu had wanted to give all the leaders at the meeting an opportunity to see the succession will, verify its validity and consequently endorse the succession of Mudegu to the new position of the High Priest as was willed by Kivuli himself.

Following the production of the will and the declaration by the church leaders that it was valid, as it bore the correct specimen signature of the late Kivuli, it became evident to Filemona Orwa as well as to the AICN membership as a whole that Orwa had indeed been bypassed in the succession will. This was a shocking realisation which was not easy to accept by both Orwa and his followers. His first reaction was to protest against the possibility of Mudegu's succession. These protests were based on the clear-cut promises and the numerous public statements which Kivuli had made about the succession when he was still alive. The majority of Orwa's supporters, mainly those from the Luo ethnic group, similarly reacted against it. A number of persons holding prominent positions in the church including Albert Boaz Nyang'ori, Alexander Oguso, Japheth Yahuma, Joel Andanyi and Petro Waruku in fact called it an act of trickery. They condemned the will and pledged to support Orwa for the leadership of the AICN against Harun Mudegu. The latter on the other hand decided to keep off the conflict despite the
fact that it was him who had been mentioned in the will. This was evident from his own comments when Chief Zablou Amuanda of Nyang'ori Location suggested to him that he should seek legal redress if Orwa continued to oppose his succession to the High Priesthood. He stated:

"I cannot engage in a fight for leadership.... if it is the Will of God and that of His people that I be made their High Priest... then it will be done". 20

Mudegu's supporters on the other hand openly indicated that they would stand by the will and give Mudegu their full support. This powerful opposition group was led by Zedekia Musungu and Samson Busitsa. They instigated their supporters to heckle Orwa during church meetings and even during sermons.21

Filemona Orwa's opposition to accepting the accession of Harun Mudegu can be explained in two ways. First, Orwa came to believe very strongly that it was Mudegu who had conspired against his own succession. Secondly, he felt that Mudegu, being young, lacked sufficient experience and wisdom to steer the church to its proper destiny. Besides this, Orwa also felt that Mudegu had no leadership qualities and was therefore incapable of managing the disparate members of the AICN. Thus, it had become apparent to many observers by the beginning of 1975 that although on the face of it the church was in the period of mourning, underneath a serious power struggle was in fact
taking place, and detailed plans and strategies were being laid to block the succession of Harun Mudegu.

Filemona Orwa took two main steps so as to block the succession of Harun Mudegu. First, he undertook to court the friendship of Mama Rebeka, Kivuli's widow, by creating suspicion and mistrust between her and Mudegu. Secondly, he tried to persuade his followers, most of whom who were Luos, to oppose the will. He justified his objections to Mudegu's leadership on three major grounds. First, Orwa argued that Mudegu was a young and inexperienced man who was not conversant with the affairs of the church. As such, he was incapable of providing wise leadership to the AICN. Secondly, he argued that he was afraid that Mudegu might mishandle church funds if given the leadership of the church. Thirdly, Orwa also expressed the fear that Mudegu might transfer the headquarters of the AICN to Tiriki Location if he became the High Priest of the AICN.22

These fears were not without foundation. It had already been claimed that Mudegu had embezzled church funds from Banja pastorate which had been earmarked for the construction of the Cathedral (The Safina Church) at the headquarters.23 Besides this, which many people still recalled that Mudegu was amongst the few people who had proposed in 1961 that the AICN headquarters be established at Hamisi in Tiriki Location instead of Nyang’ori Location.24
Filemona Orwa apparently succeeded in rallying the support of Mama Rebeka and a few Luhyia members of the church. The majority of the Luo membership also resolved to support him against Mudegu. In a meeting held at Nyahera Obode Church, in April 1975, in which the Kisuno, Kano, Nyakach, Kabondo and Alego Ministries were represented, the Luo leaders expressed unanimous support for Orwa. The majority of the Luhyia leadership and general membership, however, continued to support Mudegu and termed Orwa’s efforts to discredit the former as mere propaganda “born out of vindictive feelings.” This marked the beginning of an open rift between the Luo and Luhyia members and the open conflict which characterized the subsequent history of the AICN.

After succeeding in rallying quite a substantial amount of support on his side against Harun Mudegu, Filemona Orwa began to lay the groundwork for the impending elections and to scheme for his sole candidacy. It is important to reiterate that although Orwa commanded a lot of support by this time, he still felt insecure because of so much Luhyia opposition which he had to reckon with. The Luhyia members as has been mentioned previously were in the majority and having expressed their total opposition to Orwa, it was conceivable that they would support anybody who volunteered to stand against the latter. The leaders of the opposition group had in fact vowed to see to it “that Filemona Orwa did not secure the church leadership.” Thus, Orwa’s main concern after he declared that the elections would be held on 23rd July 1975, was to ensure that Harun Mudegu or any other person did not contest for the position of the High Priest. The positions to be filled
included that of the High Priest, the Chief Priest and the Chairman of the AICN.27

Two months before the elections were due to be held, the office of the Secretary-General, which was responsible for organizing the elections issued a circular on 11th May 1975 containing the following provisions intended to guide the candidates for various vacant positions and the electorates. These were as follows:

(1) That only three candidates would be allowed to contest the position of the High Priest.

(2) Candidates for the position of the High Priest would have to be cleared by a committee of four church elders, jointly appointed by Filemona Orwa in his capacity as Chairman of the AICN, Albert Boaz Nyang'ori, the Secretary-General, and Alexander Oguso, the Treasurer of the church.

(3) All AICN members in all pastorates throughout Kenya were to go to the Headquarters to vote on the election day.

(4) Until the new leaders were elected, all the affairs of the church would be handled by the outgoing Chairman, Jackson Filemona Orwa.

The foregoing election provisions were immediately opposed by Mudegu's supporters who interpreted them as a clever manoeuvre by Filemona Orwa to bar Mudegu from contesting. The opposition leaders asserted that by virtue of these provisions, it was obvious that Harun Mudegu was going to find it difficult to be cleared by the Elector...
Coramittee. This was because Orwa had packed the committee with his staunch supporters and closest confidants.

In view of this, the opposition group resolved to boycott the elections. They refused to forward Mudegu's or any other name for the vacant posts. In spite of this, however, the office of the Secretary-General went ahead with the arrangements for the impending elections. On July 9th, 1975, Orwa was declared the sole candidate for the position of the High Priest and arrangements began for his installation which was due on the 29th July 1975.

In the meantime, the leading members of the Mudegu group who included Zedekia Musungu, Samson Busitsa, Elsaphano Odenyi, Ainea Babu and Petro Waore organized a meeting at Banja (the home of Mudegu). During the meeting, they decided to oppose Orwa's candidature on the installation day.

On the 29th July 1975 before Orwa was installed, Zedekia Musungu, the leader of the opposition group stood up to oppose Orwa's candidature on several grounds:

(1) They argued that Orwa's scheming had prevented them from proposing their own candidate. They said that the scheming was therefore both unconstitutional and ungodly.

(2) The second objection against Orwa's succession was that Orwa was already too old (72 years old) and should give way to a younger and enlightened person who could cope with the
demands and the complexities of running a modern church.

(3) The third objection was based on cultural grounds. The group argued that, being uncircumcised, Filemona Orwa was according to Luhyia beliefs still a child, was unclean, and was therefore unfit to perform important church functions like baptism, wedding ceremonies, ordination of Priests and the Blessing (Gweth) Ceremony amongst the Luhyia followers of the AICN.29

Having given their reasons as above the opposition group rejected Filemona Orwa and urged the whole church to do the same. Instead they proposed Harun Mudegu. At that point the meeting became "disorderly and degenerated into a shouting match."30 It was therefore closed abruptly and postponed indefinitely. The opposition group thus carried the day.

Following his failure to capture the post of the High Priest, Filemona Orwa adopted another plan. He decided to propose the candidacy of Mama Rebeka for the position of the High priest. Mama Rebeka was very much revered and regarded as the "Holy Mother" in the AICN. This implied that, if chosen, Rebeka would command automatic support of and loyalty from the church membership, including the two opposing factions. It is for this reason that Orwa felt that Rebeka was the best possible person who could lead the church, unite the two warring camps, and bring peace to the AICN once again.31

According to the testimonies of Patrick Waruku, Ismael Agumba and Filemona Orwa, the latter decided to sacrifice his own personal
ambitions of obtaining the church leadership, and instead planned to have Rebeka enthroned because he was sincerely concerned about the growth and the continuity of the AICN. Thus "he was prepared to do anything that was favourable to the two groups which would give the church a breathing space, and the unity to continue along the lines established before the death of Zakayo Kivuli."^32

The other possible explanation for Orwa's decision to push the candidature of Mama Rebeka, apart from blocking Mudegu, is that Orwa calculated that if Rebeka became the High Priest while he still remained the Chairman and the Chief Minister of the AICN, he could still exercise his authority and influence a lot of the church's decisions and affairs through manipulation.\(^33\) Apart from the fact that Rebeka was not conversant with the running of church affairs which meant in essence that she would depend largely on the advisers and the decisions of her Chairman (her deputy), Orwa also knew for a fact that Rebeka was known to be too weak, indecisive and always vacillating. This meant therefore that she could be easily manipulated. In other words, Filemona Orwa saw that the installation of Mama Rebeka to the church leadership would make him the de-facto High Preist of the AICN.

In order to get this plan (of installing Rebeka) accepted, Filemona Orwa arranged a series of secret meetings with prominent church members from both groups.\(^33\) During the meetings, Orwa succeeded in convincing both factions to accept the decision to install Mama Rebeka. It was also agreed that Orwa would remain the Chairman and the Chief Minister of the church, and that these new agreements would subsequently be
communicated to the rest of the church membership for approval before they were effected.

When this agreement which was seen as a solution to the succession crisis was immediately communicated to the rest of the church membership at large, the latter reacted in two opposing ways. First, a lot of the younger church members and the more enlightened of this group were particularly disappointed. They objected to the proposed installation of Rebeka on three main grounds. Firstly, they argued that Rebeka being illiterate would not be able to cope with the complexities of running a modern church. Secondly, they asserted that Rebeka was a woman and her installation to the church leadership would be going against existing church laws and provisions, which did not provide for the ordination of women. Thirdly, they also argued that Rebeka was already too old, and her proposed deputy equally old. They could not therefore visualise how the church could be properly run by the two.

The second group of church members who consisted of the elderly and more conservative elements, and who clearly revered Mama Rebeka celebrated the decision to install her as the new High Priest of the AIGN. Since they were also in the majority, they overruled the younger group and their view carried the day.34

Nevertheless, there was an obstacle still to be overcome. This was the church constitution which did not sanctify the installation of women as spiritual leaders of the church.
In spite of the apparent impasse, Orwa and his immediate supporters and advisers decided that the only way out was to insert a new clause into the church constitution providing for and legalizing the ordination of women, and therefore legitimizing the installation of Mama Rebekah. This action managed to silence the opponents, and temporarily brought to an end the succession crisis in the AICN. It made it possible for Mama Rebekah to be installed as High Priest and the ceremony to do so was held in November 1975.

The installation of Mama Rebekah as High Priest was an important turning point in the affairs of the church and also in the crisis which had faced the AICN following the death of Zakayo Kivuli. It is therefore important to comment on the part which Filemona Orwa played in bringing about this development. In getting Mama Rebekah to be installed as the High Priest, Filemona Orwa who was the co-founder of the AICN acted wisely and it is possible that he was indeed prompted by the urge to ensure the unity and the continuity of the church. Mama Rebekah as has been stated in the earlier portions of this chapter was revered by both the Luhyia and Luo followers of the church and by the two opposing factions. At the time of the crisis, Orwa realized that though a woman, Rebekah was the only remaining symbol of unity in the AICN. In terms of the heated church politics at the time, Rebekah was the best possible person available at the time to cool down ethnic or group sentiments as they presented themselves during the crisis. It was a question of genuine interest and diplomacy. A less diplomatic leader would have tried to impose his candidature on the church which after all he had helped to found. Orwa, however, avoided that pitfall by supporting Mama
Rebeka and promoting her candidature even though he knew that she was weak, and inexperienced and was likely to present problems in the running of the AICN. To Filemona Orwa, it was this unity which Rebeka stood for, and which also implied the unity of the church which was more important. It is therefore tempting to arrive at the conclusion that Orwa was indeed guided by the need to preserve unity and the continuity of the church when he decided to promote the candidature of Mama Rebeka as the High Priest of the AICN.

6:3 The Rift between Orwa and Rebeka

The installation of Mama Rebeka as High Priest of the church did not bring to an end the power struggle in the AICN as had been hoped by Orwa. In the beginning, the working relations between Rebeka and Orwa were cordial. They conducted church functions such as baptism, weddings and blessing ceremonies in many parts of Western Kenya. Rebeka relied on and often consulted Filemona Orwa on many issues affecting the church because she realised that Orwa had the experience in the running of church affairs. On many occasions, Orwa also sought and obtained approval from Mama Rebeka for all proposed church meetings and any other church undertakings. On the surface, there was no real reason for conflict. This state of affairs continued until the end of 1976.

At the beginning of 1977 there began to develop open conflicts between Filemona Orwa and Mama Rebeka. These conflicts arose from the interference by some members of the "Mudegu Group" who clearly showed that they were getting unhappy because of Orwa's closeness to the new church leadership. Some of these people who included Jacob Goigoi, Joel Bulali,
Joseph Indieka and Thomas Kyayuga started creating mistrust and suspicion between Rebeka and Filemona Orwa. On more than two occasions, between February and May 1977, they went to the High Priest with allegations that Orwa was planning to oust her and take over the leadership of the church. The main objective of these allegations was to create fear in Rebeka and convince her that her leadership of the church was in danger of a takeover bid by Filemona Orwa. Gradually, Rebeka started becoming suspicious of Orwa's close working relationship with her, and indeed began to interpret even "genuinely given advice as a threat to her leadership of the church".

What under normal circumstances would have been regarded as minor conflicts within the church acquired momentum by the following year. Disagreements now came to the surface. The main areas of disagreement between Filemona Orwa and Rebeka Junba bordered on such issues as the spending of church offerings, disciplining of church members and on matters related to decision-making procedures within the church.

In the area of church offerings, Orwa held the view that the local churches needed to keep a portion of what they collected during the year so that whenever the need for money arose, they did not have to hold an impromptu fund-raising meeting as they usually did. To Rebeka, however, she felt that the practice of submitting all the offerings collected by the local churches to the headquarters should be maintained.

Similarly, the two church leaders were quite divergent in the way the discipline process within the church had to be executed. Unlike Rebeka,
Orwa had a more moderate approach to the issue of discipline. While Rebeka subscribed to the view that wrong-doers amongst the church membership should be expelled, Orwa on the other hand felt that such followers should be counselled and then given time to reform, without necessarily having to expel them, a measure which he thought to be an extreme form of disciplining such members.  

Orwa's way of looking at the disciplinary process conformed more to the Good Shepherd story in the Bible in which even the bad sheep were not discarded but ways were sought by the shepherd by which they were brought back to the fold. It is apparently due to this that the church had been applying this method of discipline even during the Kivuli era.  

Besides these two areas, Orwa and Rebeka also disagreed on matters concerning decision-making procedures. Orwa felt that before certain fundamental decisions were taken by the High Priest, a committee-type of approach should be applied rather than adopting decision-by-decree style.  

In the face of such clear opposition from Mama Rebeka, fueled by other accusations from the Mudegu group, Filemona Orwa still adopted a conciliatory approach. He never tried to force his views on Mama Rebeka. However, by the beginning of 1978, Rebeka appears to have made up her mind about getting rid of Orwa from the church hierarchy, and was merely waiting for an appropriate occasion to do so.  

On 12th April 1978, the church held an Annual Church Budget Meeting. This meeting was attended by the Chairman, the Secretary-General, the
Treasurer and all important church officials from various parts of Western Kenya. Mama Rebeka who was chairing the meeting started by bringing into the open disagreements between her and her Chairman. She declared at this meeting that she was no longer prepared to work with Filemona Orwa and therefore directed those at the meeting to think about nominating someone to replace Orwa as Chairman of the AICN and further proposed that the latter be expelled from the church within two months. To justify this drastic step, she gave the following accusations against Filemona Orwa:

(1) She accused Orwa of not observing his power limits by interfering in the decision-making processes of the Church. She argued that her working relationship with Orwa confirmed that Orwa wanted to use her as a figurehead.

(2) She accused Orwa of showing no respect for her as the High Priest of the Church.

(3) She also accused Orwa of protecting Church members whose conduct was unacceptable to the norms of the AICN.

The last accusation arose from a difference with Orwa on how to handle the claim that Joel Andanyi, a church minister in Tiriki, had caused the death of Olewe (Rebeka's son-in-law) through magic. Rebeka had wanted to set up a disciplinary committee to execute disciplinary action against Andanyi. Filemona Orwa objected on the grounds that this was a family or at most a local matter which should be settled either at the family level or by the local church in Tiriki.42
Since Rebeka's views were given in a form of a directive from the High Priest, the people attending the meeting found themselves unable to comment or even give advice. They were thus forced to endorse her views. Mama Rebeka then proceeded to expel Orwa saying:

Orwa leave Nineveh with immediate effect.
I don't want to see you here again.
Take all the things you ever brought here including the iron sheets from the church roof and leave me alone with my God.

Two days after the verbal expulsion, Filemona Orwa convened a meeting which was attended by all his supporters at Nyahera, in Kisumu Location, to discuss the implications of his expulsion and the next course of action. At this meeting, Filemona Orwa and his supporters resolved to challenge the expulsion on the grounds that he was being victimized by the High Priest.

On 16th April 1978, the High Priest of the AICN announced through the local newspapers the expulsion of Orwa and all the prominent supporters of the Chairman who had taken part in the meeting at Nyahera. Those expelled together with Orwa included Japheth Yahuma (Church Minister - Alego); Albert Boaz Nyang'ori (Secretary-General), Alexander Oguso (AICN Treasurer), Paul Omoro (Church Minister from East Kano), Charles Oiilo (Church Minister-West Kano) and Joshua Okong'o (AICN - Youth Leader).

Having been thus expelled, Filemona Orwa called another meeting of all his supporters on 20th April 1978 at Nyahera. During this meeting, Orwa
and his supporters decided against forming a new church and instead resolved to work towards constitutional changes, which would allow them to turn themselves into a Diocese of the AICN. They subsequently approached a prominent Nairobi Lawyer (S.M. Otieno) to help them amend the AICN constitution.

By September 1979, the constitution had been successfully amended and the Nyanza Diocese consequently created. This new Diocese whose headquarters was at Ramba (about six kilometres from Kisumu Town) was officially registered by the end of 1979. The information about the new Diocese was subsequently communicated to the AICN headquarters at Nineveh. The reaction of the AICN headquarters was hostile. Mama Rebeka insisted that Orwa and his group had been permanently expelled from the AICN and therefore could not form a diocese affiliated to it. The matter was referred to the High Court in Kisumu, and the High Court ruled in favour of the formation of the Diocese. Thus in spite of Mama Rebeka's objections, the Diocese became a legal entity, thus allowing Orwa and his group to continue operating. The stage was thus set for the final split of the AICN, and new forms of growth which were to characterize the later history of the church.

6.4 The Impact of the split on the AICN

In the previous section of this chapter we have traced the development within the AICN following the death of Zakayo Kivuli with particular reference to the controversy of succession to the position of the High Priest. Since its inception, this was the first major test of survival
which the AICN faced. Naturally, many questions would arise on how the Church managed to weather the storm of the crisis and what other related outcome ensued.

It has already been indicated that the crisis eventually led to the split in the Church. In this section therefore an attempt will be made to show to what extent the split influenced the Church. Did it, for instance, weaken it? Did it change the character of the Church? Did it have an impact on the membership or did the split in any way interfere with the previously laid down development programmes? Other related questions which may be legitimately asked include the quality of the new leadership within the AICN as a whole. Equally important is the question on whether the split within the AICN encouraged separatist tendencies within the Church as well as the whole question of the viability and vigour of the Church as an organisation in Western Kenya in the wake of the crisis.

One of the most significant and unfortunate outcomes of the crisis of succession in the AICN and of Filemona Orwa's reactions in endeavouring to contain it in the early stages, was the polarisation of the Church membership along ethnic lines, with the majority of the Luhyia supporting the Mudegu Group (otherwise known as the "Nineveh Group") and most of the Luo supporting Filemona Orwa's Group (also known as the "Kisumu Group"). However, a closer examination of the composition of the two groups indicated that matters were not always clear cut. There were a few groups of people like Joel Andanyi who though a Luhyia consistently showed support for Orwa. The same can be said of Paul Petro Waore, Orwa's own cousin, who until his death in 1987 supported the "Nineveh Group".
In attempting to respond to the question how did the split influence the Church, it is important to state that the originally strong Church which was based at Nineveh and whose central administration had overwhelming authority over all the Church Ministeries and Pastorates was very much weakened with the departure of the majority of the Luo members who now became the core membership of the new Diocese based at Kisumu. The departure of the majority of the Luo membership of the original Church also changed its character. The church at Nineveh was now to a large extent a "tribal church". So was the one at Kisumu.

One other significant aspect of the split was the fact that the membership of the church at the AICN headquarters began to shrink, not only with the departure of the Luo members, but also Luhya members following the separatist tendencies which the split clearly encouraged. Former Church members from various parts of Western Province who had until the creation of the Nyanza Diocese remained loyal to Nineveh and regarded it as their headquarters now felt that they too could create new Dioceses. In the early 1980s, for instance, new AICN Dioceses sprang up in Mombasa in Coast Province, in Kakamega in Western Province and also in Busia District.

One of the most important features of the newly created Dioceses was that they were basically independent entities whose leadership was not, to all intents and purposes, subordinate or even answerable to the leadership at Nineveh. The Dioceses and the headquarters were in fact often antagonistic to one another, as the latter often tried to "kill" the growth of any new Dioceses and bring others into its subjugation. Hence the
"explosion" of the new Dioceses was in fact a threat to the very existence and stability of the AICN as a Church with its headquarters at Nineveh.

Some of the nativist tendencies must, however, be attributed to the weaknesses of the leadership at Nineveh following the departure of Filemona Orwa. Many Church members like Joel Andanyi who left to form their own Churches indicated that they no longer had confidence in Rebeka as High Priest or in John Mweresa (Kivuli II) who subsequently took over from her.

Another significant factor which clearly showed the lack of confidence in the church leadership after the departure of Filemona Orwa was the fact that several members returned to their former missionary-led churches soon after Orwa headed towards Kisumu. In Nyang'ori Location alone, for instance, thirty-three original members of the AICN went back to the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, which was in the vicinity of the AICN headquarters. Amongst the thirty-three members, was Mweresa's own elder brother who decided to leave the AICN and joined the P.A.G. Several members also left the AICN and joined other African independent churches in the area such as the African Divine Church and the East African Roho Church in Nyang'ori. All these go along to strengthen the argument that the AICN Church at Nineveh was shrinking in membership as many people were departing, either to join Orwa or to join other Churches, African as well as Missionary, in the AICN vicinity.

The instability at Nineveh which as already been mentioned was brought by the departure of Filemona Orwa and the subsequent explosion of Ne
Dioceses, affected not only the growth of the Church but also its development programmes throughout the study area. A lot of the economic and educational projects which were initiated as early as 1974 were still at a standstill by the time of this research. For example, the building of two schools in Kano East which was considered the AICN (Nineveh) territory was abandoned. Equally abandoned was the construction of commercial buildings in Gambogi (Nyang'ori) as well as in Luanda (Bunyore).

A look at the Kisumu group, or the Nyanza Diocese under the leadership of Filemona Orwa showed that the membership had continued to grow, using educational and social programmes which the new Diocese promoted. For example, the AICN school at Obede in Kisumu Location was originally only a primary school. This was later promoted by the Nyanza Diocese into a full-fledged secondary school, with the consequence that a lot of the young people from the school swelled the membership of the Diocese. Many graduates of the school such as Yona Orao, Daniel Oguso and Amos Adel subsequently became young Pastors and Ministers of the Church who helped to popularise the teachings of the church and to spread the gospel amongst the youth.

The stability of the Nyanza Diocese was equally conducive to other numerous social and economic activities by the Church membership within the area. The economic activities included the construction of residential and commercial buildings at Chulaimbo, Ogada and Bandani townships by women groups and youth groups. Various women leaders were also sponsored by the Diocese for training at the Government Training Institute (G.T.I) at Maseno on the basics of public health, child nutrition and child care. On their
return these women leaders were instrumental in trying to raise the health and nutritional standards of members and non-members throughout the Diocese territory.49

It is important to reiterate once more that whereas all the above developments were taking place in the Nyanza Diocese the Nineveh group was still embroiled in leadership squabbles. All the developments above seem to have gone a long way to underscore what the late Kivuli often repeated to his followers that "whoever will abandon the footsteps of Filemona Orwa would be lost forever".50
FOOTNOTES

1. Interview with F. Orwa on 24th April 1987 at Obede; interview with J. Yahuma on 29th March 1987 at Nairobi; interview with Harun Mudegu on 13th June 1987 at Kisumu, interview with Miriam Amuli on 5th May 1987 at Luanda, interview with Boaz Nyang'or on 4th April 1987 at Sondu, and interview with Rebeka Jumba Kivuli on 23rd June 1987 at "Nineveh."

2. Interview with Rebeka Oloo on 12th September 1986 at Mbakoromo; interview with Rebeka Jumba on 23rd June 1987 at Nineveh; interview with Miriam Muga on 18th September 1986 at Ramba; interview with Wilfrida Odero on 17th September 1986 at Lela; interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd April 1987 at Kaimosi; and interview with Eliakim Anguza on 24th April 1987 at Mbale.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Interview with Paul Petro Waore on 21st July 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Japheth Yahuma on 29th March 1987 at Nairobi; interview with Joel Andanyi on 20th July 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Eliakim Anguza on 24th April 1987 at Mbale; interview with Jotham Chanzu on 7th May 1987 at Mbale; and interview with Eliud Miniga on 19th October 1987 at Ebuchiegwe.

7. Interview with Jotham Chanzu on 9th May 1987, interview with Domtilla Mang'wana on 24th December 1987 at Ebuchiegwe; and interview with Joshua Anguza on 9th May 1987 at Gambogi.

8. Ibid.
9. Harun Mudegu was the long serving Personal Secretary of Kivuli and was also the latter's son-in-law.

10. The will is even today under the care of Rebeka Jumba Kivuli. Emphasis in the original will.

11. Refer to Chapter 2, See also M.A. Amolo, op.cit.

12. Interview with F. Orwa on 19th August 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Albert Boaz Nyang'or on 17th May 1987 at Rnuba; interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd April 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Harun Mudegu on 2nd July 1987 at "Nineveh"; interview with Rebeka Jumba on 2nd July 1987 at "Nineveh"; interview with Jonathan Kaiga on 11th September 1987 at Emuhaya; and interview with Samson Busitsa on 3rd July at Kapsoeai.

13. Ibid.


15. Ibid. Rebeka Jumba op.cit., interview with Miriam Amuli on 22nd May 1987 at Emahuenje AICN Church; interview with Solomon Aseri on 14th June 1987 at Mbale; and interview with Trufena Nedia on 12th September at Nyamila.

16. Ibid.


18. Ibid.
19. Ibid; interview with Boaz Nyang’or on 17th May 1987 at Ramba; interview with Miriam Amuli on 24th May 1987 at Emahuenje Church; and interview with Solomon Aseri on 17th June 1987 at Kapsengere High School.

20. Interview with Zablon Amuanda on 11th August 1987 at Majengo; interview with Harun Mudegu on 11th August 1987 at Majengo; and interview with Dolorosa Arere on 13th August 1987 at Kiboswa and Penina Odenyi on 9th October 1987 at Serem.

21. Ibid.

22. Interview with Christopher Adero on 19th August 1986 at Karaten’g; interview with Yona Orao on 20th August 1986 at Karaten’g; interview with Ibrahim Okeyo on 20th August 1986 at Nyahera; interview with Nelson Ayara on 17th September 1986 at Daraja Mbili; interview with Samson Puoyo on 27th May 1987 at Korowe; interview with Selina Ada and Rebeka Odongo on 29th September 1986 at Karaten’g; and interview with Yoshwa Odanga on 13th April 1987 at Shamakhokho.

23. Mudegu failed to submit Shs.9440 which was entrusted to him to the headquarters in 1969.

24. Christopher Adero op.cit.. Yona Orao op.cit., Yoshwa Odanga op.cit., interview with Timotheo M’maitsi on 19th November 1987 at Hamisi; interview with Wilkista Muhadia on 19th November 1987 at Hamisi; and interview with Paulina Shunza on 21st November 1987 at Hamisi.


26. Interview with Ainea Babu on 22nd November 1987 at Gimarakwa; interview with Jothmn Chanzu on 22nd November 1987 at "Nineveh"; and interview with Meshack Okelo on 22nd November 1987 at Gimarakwa.
27. The position of Chief Priest and Chairman of the Church was until then held by Filemona Orwa. He assumed full responsibility over the Church in the absence of the High Priest.

28. It is important to point out that most of these people had been at Kivuli's bedside where they virtually saw to it that he wrote the will in Mudegu's favour before he died.

29. Interview with Samson Puoyo on 29th May 1987 at Ahero; interview with Paulo Omoro on 29th May 1987 at Ahero; interview with Daniel Olilo on 29th May 1987 at Korowe; interview with Benjamin Waruku on 17th June at Kiboswa; and interview with Joel Andanyi on 2nd September 1987 at Kaimosi.

30. Samson Puoyo op.cit., Benjamin Waruku op.cit., Joel Andanyi op.cit., interview with Selina Ada Rambim on 7th July 1987 at Ramba; interview with Charles Kungu on 7th July 1987 at Ramba; interview with Filemona Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Ramba; and interview with Rebeka Nyanga on 29th July 1987 at Gambogi.


32. Interview with Filemona Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Ramba; interview with Patrick Waruku on 22nd March 1987 at Kano Kobura; interview with Joshua Dickson Okon'go on 25th May 1987 at Kakamega; and interview with Ishmael Agumba on 25th May 1987 at Gambogi.

33. Those who attended those meetings included Rebeka Jumba, Harun Mudegu, Samson Busitsa, Ainea Babu, Zedekia Musungu, Filemona Orwa, Amon Arach, Alexander Oguso, Japheth Yahuma, Opondo Mawega and Boaz Nyang'or.

34. Interview with Joshua Dickson Okon'go on 25th May 1987 at Kakamega; interview with Patrick Asega on 25th May 1987 at Kakamega interview with Ishmael Agumba on 25th May 1987 at Gambogi; interview with Joshua
Obonyo Okong'o on 17th December 1987 at Nairobi; and interview with Yona Orao on 12th September 1987 at Karaten'g.

35. Obonyo Okong'o, op.cit., Interview with Orwa on 24th Dec. 1987 at Ramba; interview with Japheth, Yahuma on 29th March 1987 at Nairobi; interview with John Mweresa on 15th July 1987 at "Nineveh"; interview with Harun Mudegu on 17th May 1987 at Banja; and interview with Rebeka Jumba on 15th July 1987 at "Nineveh".

36. Interview with Musa Onyango on 17th June 1987 at Sondu; interview with Abisalom Ochieng' on 17th June 1987 at Sondu; interview with James Mang'wana on 29th June 1987 at Kiboswa; interview with Filemona Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; interview with Richard Oliyo on 24th June 1987 at Gambogi; and interview the Rt.Rev. John Mweresa Kivuli on 17th June 1987 at Nineveh.

37. Ibid.


39. Ibid; Mweresa op.cit.

40. Rebeka had by end of 1977 stopped consulting Orwa or any other person on matters affecting the Church. She started making the decisions single-handed and began giving directives even to the senior officials like the Chairman, Secretary-General and the Treasurer.

41. Interview with Joel Andanyi on 22nd September 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Miriam Amuli on 27th May 1987 at Luanda; and F. Orwa op.cit.
42. Interview with Joel Andanyi on 23rd March 1987 at Kaimosi; interview with Jotharia Chanzu on 25th June 1987 at Saride; interview with Harun Mudegu on 4th June 1987 at Banja; and interview with Ainea Babu on 2nd June 1987 at Kapsengere.

43. Rebeka Jumba, op.cit.

44. It was resolved that a delegation of six prominent supporters of Orwa would be sent to Rebeka with the aim to seek clarification on the reasons pertaining to the expulsion of the Chief Minister from the AICN.

45. See The Daily Nation and The Standard of April 1978; interview with Henry Ngeso on 24th December 1987 at Rambha; interview with Orwa on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera; Mweresa, op.cit.

46. F. Orwa op.cit; interview with Japheth Yahuma on 29th March 1987 at Nairobi; interview with Charles Olilo on 27th June 1987 at Korowe; interview with Samson Puoyo on 27th June 1987 at Korowe; and interview with Naum Berita on 22nd April 1987 at Nyahera.

47. Joel Andanyi left the AICN with 24 of his followers to form Kenya Israel Church which later changed its name to Marnatha. This separatist sect has spread its influence in many parts of Western Kenya.


49. They went to villages and health centres teaching women cleanliness, nutrition and general child care.

50. Rebeka Jumba, op.cit.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to examine in detail the phenomenon of Church Independency with special reference to the rise of the African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) in Western Kenya. In order to trace the evolution of Independency of this particular church, a historical analysis of it was carried out with the view to showing the significant religious, social and economic factors which were responsible for its emergence as an independent church during the colonial period and its subsequent development in the post-colonial period. Special attention was paid not only to the reasons for the initial breakaway movement, but also to factors which sustained the church and those which have come to threaten its stability. The study has been based on an extensive field work amongst the church leaders and members of the AICN, and the use of primary sources which were applied as the basis of the historical analysis and the interpretation of the problems encountered by the church.

In the review of the literature, an attempt was made to show how common the phenomenon of Church Independency has been throughout Africa, Kenya, and Western Kenya in particular, and to emphasize the fact that the rise of the AICN was not necessarily unique. This was indeed the view emphasized by B. Barrret in his work entitled Schism and Renewal in Africa, and C.G. Brown who saw Independent Church Movements as a cultural "reaction
of African peoples seeking to rediscover themselves and their own kind of life.\textsuperscript{1}

To put the rise of the AICN in its proper context, the spread of Christianity in Western Kenya through the activities of the white missionaries was analysed and efforts were made to look at the possibility that the rise of the AICN could wholly be attributed to a political, cultural and religious protest against the Canadian-based PAOC and the English-led CMS. Whereas this conclusion would have been tempting in the beginning, the subsequent analysis of the history of the AICN brought out other equally important considerations for the rise and survival, of the AICN as an independent church in Western Kenya.

As pointed out in Chapters 3 and 4, the identity and the development of the AICN as an independent Church both before and after independence was closely associated with the personalities, activities and perceptions of two dominant individuals, namely, David Zakayo Kivuli and Jackson Filemona Orwa. Since these two were "Spiritual Giants" the Church they founded subsequently came to be seen as belonging to the Spirit Movement. Indeed, the AICN maintained this tenor into the post-independence period. To this extent the study has examined the extent to which the AICN after its formation was influenced both in its doctrine and cultural characteristics by the demands and nature of the Spirit Movement which to some extent it owed its existence. Both Orwa and Kivuli were some of the first literate Africans who came into close contact with the Europeans initially at the Native Industrial Training Depot (N.I.T.D) and later at their respective missionary-led churches. Given the dominant political tempo in Kenya at
that time, it is not surprising that the two "rebelled" against the mission-led churches to found the AIGN in Western Kenya. The circumstances leading to their rebellion are discussed in the thesis, as well as the subsequent problems with their new Church which was attributed to several factors, including their contrasting individual personalities.

The organisational abilities of both Kivuli and Orwa were examined in Chapter 4. The internal weaknesses which were inherent from the very start were also observed. These internal weaknesses help to explain the problems which the newly independent Church faced in later years, during the post-independence period. As pointed out in that chapter, the greatest weakness was in the area of financial management followed by the failure of both leaders to create an independent and self-accounting organisation which did not depend on individual personalities for its survival. Inherent in this was also the perpetualism of economic exploitation of the entire Church membership by the Church leadership, a factor which surfaced significantly towards the end of Kivuli's life and which was partly responsible for the breaking of the Church and the formation of an independent Diocese at Kisumu by Filemona Orwa.

In spite of the difficulties encountered, and the weakness observed, the AIGN grew very rapidly and acquired enough membership to rival the mission-led churches in the areas under discussion. Not only did the Church grow in terms of the numbers of converts and "territory conquered" in Western Kenya, but it also managed to produce a socio-economic development programme involving the building of schools, farms and the creation of strong women groups who successfully participated in various
forms of economic activities calculated to boost the church and improve the welfare of the converts and non-converts alike. The aim of some of these activities was to create "self-reliance" as the AICN unlike the mission-led churches did not have outside or overseas donors.

The Church attracted a large membership mainly because it embraced some African traditions and showed great respect for African cultures. It has clearly been demonstrated in the study that there was a large group of people in the study area who were either dissatisfied with the practices of the mission-led churches and were waiting to get out to a "place to feel at home", or who had so far joined no church because the mission-led churches frowned upon those cultural practices which they held dear to their hearts.

The study has shown that the AICN was a multi-ethnic organisation from the very beginning with the Luhyia followers of Zakayo Kivuli being joined by the predominantly Luo followers of Filemona Orwa. This ethnic diversity could have been a source of strength had it been recognized from the very beginning and given its due recognition in the constitutional arrangements for the establishment and the running of the church. As pointed out in Chapter 6, this was not provided for, and during his life time, Zakayo Kivuli had been allowed to treat the church as his personal property with all the inherent economic exploitation of the membership both from the Luhyia and Luo sections of the church. With the death of Kivuli, the inevitable happened, that is, Kivuli's close supporters and confidants who had so far benefited most from the growth of the AICN and from the location of the headquarters on their soil decided that they could not allow Filemona Orwa - a Luo from Kisumu District - to take over the leadership of
At the beginning of this study, three hypotheses were put to test and conclusions reached. The assertion that the emergence of the African Israel Church Nineveh was not a unique phenomenon but just another case of Church independency amongst the Protestant Churches in Kenya has been amply proved. It has been demonstrated that the factors, namely political and cultural domination and economic exploitation which in 1914 forced Johana Owalo to form the Nomiyu Luo Church, forced Alfayo Odongo from the Anglican Church in 1924 to form the Church of the Holy Ghost and later in the 1940s made Elijah Masinde to start the Dini Ya Msambwa, are the very factors which forced Zakayo Kivuli and Filemona Orwa to secede from their respective mission-led churches and together form the African Israel Church Nineveh. Indeed since then, there have been many other breakaway movements in Western Kenya which have been influenced by more or less similar factors.

The second hypothesis stated that the inherent separation in the Protestant Churches was influenced by the colonial set-up and the adherents' responses to the pre-independence and post-independence situation. It has been shown in this study that the departure of Zakayo Kivuli from the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada at Nyang'ori was a typical case of African response to an untenable colonial situation where his educational advancement was being blocked by the PAOC missionaries. Similarly, for Filemona Orwa, his departure from the CMS was a reaction to the attitude of the missionaries at Nyahera towards the Africans whom they had converted to Christianity. The two above examples were but a small part of the much larger movement of African response to white evangelism,
and the rise of breakaway churches led by Africans was a culmination of events which had been brewing for several decades.

The third hypothesis stated that the crisis of succession is an important internal factor in explaining the dynamics of church independency. To the extent that these basic assumptions wholly apply to the traumatic events that led to the expulsion of Filemona Orwa from Nineveh and to the eventual establishment of the Nyanza Diocese of the AICN, this hypothesis has also been concretely proved. Soon after political independence in Kenya many independent churches sprang up as offshoots from former mission-led churches or as breakaway parts of the first wave of African independent churches like the AICN. This kind of dynamism may be frowned upon by the more conservative elements of the independent churches, and the founders of the first independent churches, but in the final analysis, it must be regarded as a healthy situation confirming the inevitability of church growth, and the spread as well as the formation of new offshoots of the original independent churches.

On the basis of the foregoing summary of the findings in this study, it is now possible to arrive at some conclusions which can then be followed by recommendations on what attitudes the government and the Kenyan society at large should adopt towards the phenomenon of continued church independency in the post-colonial period. Of great interest is to be able to explain what causes it and the political and social ramifications which may be associated with it. Lastly, it is equally important to point out
areas requiring further research in an effort to fully understand the
dynamics of church independency in the colonial as well as the post-
colonial period not only in Western Kenya but in other parts of the country
as well.

To begin with, the study of the AICN has revealed that the most
dominant factor which perhaps explains Church independency in the colonial
period was the attitude of the European missionaries towards their African
converts. Those who joined the missionary-led churches like Zakayo Kivuli
and Filemona Orwa had come into very close contact with the missionaries.
They had come to admire their powers both in the religious field as well as
in the purely socio-economic fields. Unfortunately, the attitude of the
European missionaries towards the African converts as experienced by both
Kivuli and Orwa and their attitude towards the African cultural traditions
was always very patronising and negative. Such attitudes were responsible
for the first major frictions between the missionaries and most of their
African converts and must be called upon to explain the first major splits
which led to the formation of African independent churches like the AICN.
Thus when Kivuli rebelled against the Canadian missionaries at Nyang'ori
and Orwa against the CMS missionaries at Nyahera, the most important cause
of the "rebellion" was the poor attitude of the missionaries and their
failure to attend to and satisfy the cultural needs of the Africans.

The rise of the African Israel Church (AICN) and the special attention
it paid to the cultural requirements of the Africans which had been
otherwise despised and trodden upon by the European missionaries gave the new flock a new hope. It fulfilled their spiritual needs while at the same time gave them room to attend to some of the cultural requirements which were particularly central to their lives as Africans. Indeed as Welbourn and Ogot would say, the new church provided the Africans with "a place to feel at home".  

The spread of the spirit movement in Western Kenya in late 1920s and early 1930s was also an important factor in explaining the emergence of the AICN. The missionaries had preached the supremacy of the Holy Spirit, the consequence of which was the rapid growth of the Spirit groups within the missionary Churches in Western Kenya. These groups gradually but firmly began to disagree with some of the teachings of the missionaries and with their attitude towards many aspects of the African traditional belief system. Once Orwa and Kivuli had found themselves in direct opposition to the missionaries, the Spirit groups within these churches came to their massive support and joined them in great numbers. Thus it can be rightly concluded that the spirit movement prepared the way for a strong independent movement within the missionary churches in Western Kenya and provided the foundation on which the AICN was formed.

Another important conclusion is that the emergence of church independency and the formation of African Independent Churches like the AICN was very much tied up with personality cults. In the special case of the AICN this personality cult revolved around Zakayo Kivuli and Filemona Orwa. Both were very strong personalities with Zakayo Kivuli standing out even more than Filemona Orwa as a powerful preacher and a natural leader.
Kivuli therefore provided a rallying point for many groups of African Christians who were dissatisfied with the Pentecostal missionaries at Nyang'ori, and was thus able to lead these disgruntled elements away from Nyang'ori to form a new Church. Similarly, at Nyahera, Filemona Orwa was the rallying point for those African Church followers who were dissatisfied with CMS missionaries at Ogada and Maseno, and who wanted to split from the CMS in an effort to find "a place to feel at home". Under the leadership of Kivuli and Orwa these two groups came together to form the AICN. From this conclusion about the nature of the breakaway groups can be drawn the general point that for church independency to grow and develop, there must be one or more strong personalities, very much respected by the dissenters for their powerful preaching methods and other leadership qualities such as charisma.

Related to the personality cult is the personal ambitions of the aspiring leaders which is always a factor of church independency. Within the PAOC. and the CMS in Western Kenya, as indeed was true for other parts of the country, there were always a few ambitious individuals like Kivuli and Orwa who felt that converting people to Christianity should not be the monopoly of white missionaries. To a certain extent, it can be said that such leaders were driven by their personal ambitions to establish their own independent churches. Thus, the use of the importance of "African cultural requirements" could be interpreted as one of the pretexts which were used by such individuals to justify secession from the mission-led churches and thereby satisfying their personal ambitions.
From the study it has been shown that Filemona Orwa was primarily responsible for the founding of the Movement and that later on, he teamed up with Zakayo Kivuli to establish the Church known as the African Israel Church Nineveh. In the study, it was shown that Orwa played a dominant role in the formation of the Church. However, because of his respect for the spiritual powers of Zakayo Kivuli, he decided to hand over the ultimate leadership of the Church to the latter. Throughout the early and later history of the Church, Zakayo Kivuli never forgot the fact that it was Filemona Orwa who had played the deciding role during the formative stages of the Church and it was natural for him to make Orwa his deputy. Throughout this period both Orwa and Kivuli worked harmoniously, and in concert, with each other.

In their effort to make the new Church appealing, the AICN leaders introduced a system of worship and Church rules which were familiar to the Africans. The new Church also accommodated African values and cultural practices where these were found not to be in conflict with the teachings of the Bible. However, because of lack of proper education and what could be termed as lack of sophistication in religious matters, the new Church leaders failed to provide an administrative structure which would be free of many forms of abuse. A careful analysis of the events as they unfolded conclusively pointed out to the fact that herein lay the seeds for the future crisis that bequeathed the AICN following the death of Kivuli.

From a careful study of the events as narrated in this thesis, it is clear that towards the end of his life, Kivuli began to sideline Filemona Orwa. This is typical of the kind of leadership struggles observed in many
African Independent Churches in the area. In the case of the AICN, however, it is important to isolate the interested parties to the conflict and to look at the sincerity of Kivuli and his relationship with Orwa up to the time of his death in 1974. A careful analysis would reveal that in the absence of pressure from the Mudegu group, Kivuli would not have changed his mind about Filemona Orwa. It is evident that Orwa's opponents merely took advantage of the weak, helpless and dying Kivuli to force him to endorse their candidate at the exclusion of Filemona Orwa.

At the superficial level, the leadership struggles in the AICN during the time of Kivuli and even after his death can easily be regarded as having been ethnic, but the ethnic animosity was only observed and observable when Filemona Orwa was being overthrown from the AICN headquarters. The Church politics at the time which revolved around the general fear that the headquarters might be moved to Ramba by Filemona Orwa and hence downgrade Nineveh can also be tied to ethnicity, but a closer look at the events reveals that there were many Luos supporting the Mudegu Group and at the same time there were many Luhyias who consistently supported Orwa.

As time went by and especially towards the beginning of 1970s, the early attractions of respect for cultural traditions which had justified the mass movement of followers from the missionary-led Churches to the African independent churches, began to be replaced by new considerations and new pressures. Of particular concern was the economic exploitation of the followers by the Church leaders which led to mild disquiet in the early days but which was bound to boil over in later years. During the life
history of the AICN, Zakayo Kivuli had been a successful charismatic leader, but had failed to see to it that his followers in the new Church were not economically exploited by the Church leadership. As time went by the AICN Church followers started feeling that they were being exploited by the Church leadership. This was because the Church leadership had failed to provide an administrative structure within the Church, which was free of economic abuse.

Because of the nature of the hierarchical arrangement of the Church, the High Priest controlled the economic resources of the Church. To the extent that these resources had been locally raised by the total Church membership, the Church members had every right to question how and by whom these resources were appropriated. Unfortunately, under Kivuli, such open questioning was not allowed, and anyone who dared risked expulsion from the Church. It is fair to suggest that herein lay the seeds for future split in the Church.

It has been shown in the study that certain followers of Filemona Orwa had wanted to question how Church funds were being spent but that they had been restrained by Orwa. This meant as we have stated earlier on that the disquietness about the mismanagement of the Church resources was muted in the early days. By the time of Kivuli's death, however, it became the central dispute with those supporting Mudegu determined to keep a tight control on the resources of the Church and those supporting Orwa insisting that there must be an end to the economic exploitation that had gone on for too long and which Kivuli and the Nineveh headquarters had been inevitably associated with.
Thus an obvious conclusion of this thesis is that economic considerations, in particular the inheritance of the wealth of the Church, played a decisive role in the leadership struggle. The remaining Church followers, after Kivuli's death were anxious to know who was going to inherit the wealth of the Church. Those who supported Filemona Orwa clearly wanted to have a controlling say on the wealth of the Church. At the same time those Luo Church members who decided to remain at Nineveh can be said to have done so because they still wanted to be associated with the wealth at the headquarters. It is also fair to conclude that those who wanted Filemona Orwa to take over the leadership of the Church were motivated by the desire to inherit and have a controlling say in the economic resources of the AICN. In contrast to this, the supporters of Mudegu were determined not to let go the economic advantages that went with keeping the wealth of the Church at Nineveh. Hence economic considerations are extremely important in explaining the crisis that unfolded after the death of Kivuli and attempts to explain the events in ethnic terms may often miss the point.

Several decades of self-government had passed and the followers of the AICN were by the late 1970s able to reflect on the what socio-economic and cultural achievements they had made since the establishment of the AICN. One of the outcomes of this reflection was the sort of disenchantment and disillusionment that began to repel some of the members from the Church that they had spent so much energy to establish. As we have already stated earlier on when it reached this point, the early attractions of respect for cultural traditions which had justified the mass movement of followers from the missionary-led Churches to the African independent Churches were no
longer strong enough to hold the Church together. It is therefore not surprising that many members were now no longer feeling at home in their independent Church, and began to look for other places where they could feel at home. Thus, the new Diocese in Kisumu fulfilled the need for such a place.

The obvious complexities which have been revealed by this study are symptomatic of any church movement in growing societies which have come under the influence of varied cultures both from within and without Africa. Any attempt to oversimplify the cause and effects of the observed events will obviously miss the point.

The study has revealed that African societies are not immune to changes which are self-generated and in so far as religion plays a very central role in their everyday affairs, a historical study of religious movements must be based on a detailed understanding of all the complex factors which are operational during any period of time.

It is concluded that weak leadership is a major factor contributing to dissension in the African independent churches, to economic exploitation, and to the lack of clear-cut constitutional guidelines for church growth and normal expansion which is expected of these new African run institutions. It is recommended that the up and coming independent churches, should be encouraged to be development oriented, to encourage education and to provide clear-cut constitutional provisions for church governance and for the avoidance of conflict. In the event of inevitable conflicts, there should also be carefully laid down provisions for conflict
resolution. Finally, it is recommended that the independent churches should have clear-cut economic goals to minimise the economic exploitation of their followers by the church leadership.

For the historian there is a wealth of new material for other researches, for example a look at the Kenya Israel Church, which was a similar independent movement in the same area as the AICN. Other independent churches in this densely populated part of Kenya which may equally deserve attention include the African Divine Church, the East African Spirit Church, and the Holy Ghost Church of East Africa. All these are worthy subjects for research by other scholars, and it is recommended that those interested may wish to explore any of these topics in greater detail.
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GLOSSARY

Nyasaye - The one who is adored.

Nyakalaga - The one found everywhere.

Were - The one who is perfect or blameless.

Ajuoke - Medicinemen.

Jobilo - Diviners.

Nak - Extraction of six lower teeth among the Luo.

Kipande - Colonial introduced identity card.

Jo-Roho - People of the spirit.

Posho - Daily ration, usually of maize flour.

Nyapara - Foreman in a work place.

Shamba boy - Colonial word for someone working in the kitchen garden.

Baraza - Gathering of an official kind.

Wokofu - Salvation.

Warruok - Salvation.

Watume - Prophets.

Gweth - Blessing.

Ushirika - Co-operative work.

Rabodi - Spirit cult.

Juogi - Spirit possession.

Jomangi Juogi - Those possessed by the spirit.

Tung - Bullhorn.
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<tr>
<td>AICN</td>
<td>African Israel Church Nineveh.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMS</td>
<td>Methodist Missionary Society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAM</td>
<td>Friends African Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAIM</td>
<td>Friends African Industrial Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>African Inland Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHM</td>
<td>Mill Hill Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACIM</td>
<td>South Africa Compound Interior Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAOC</td>
<td>Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAG</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIM</td>
<td>Nilotic Independent Mission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NITD</td>
<td>Native Industrial Training Depot.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNC</td>
<td>Local Native Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDE</td>
<td>Christian Education Department.</td>
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